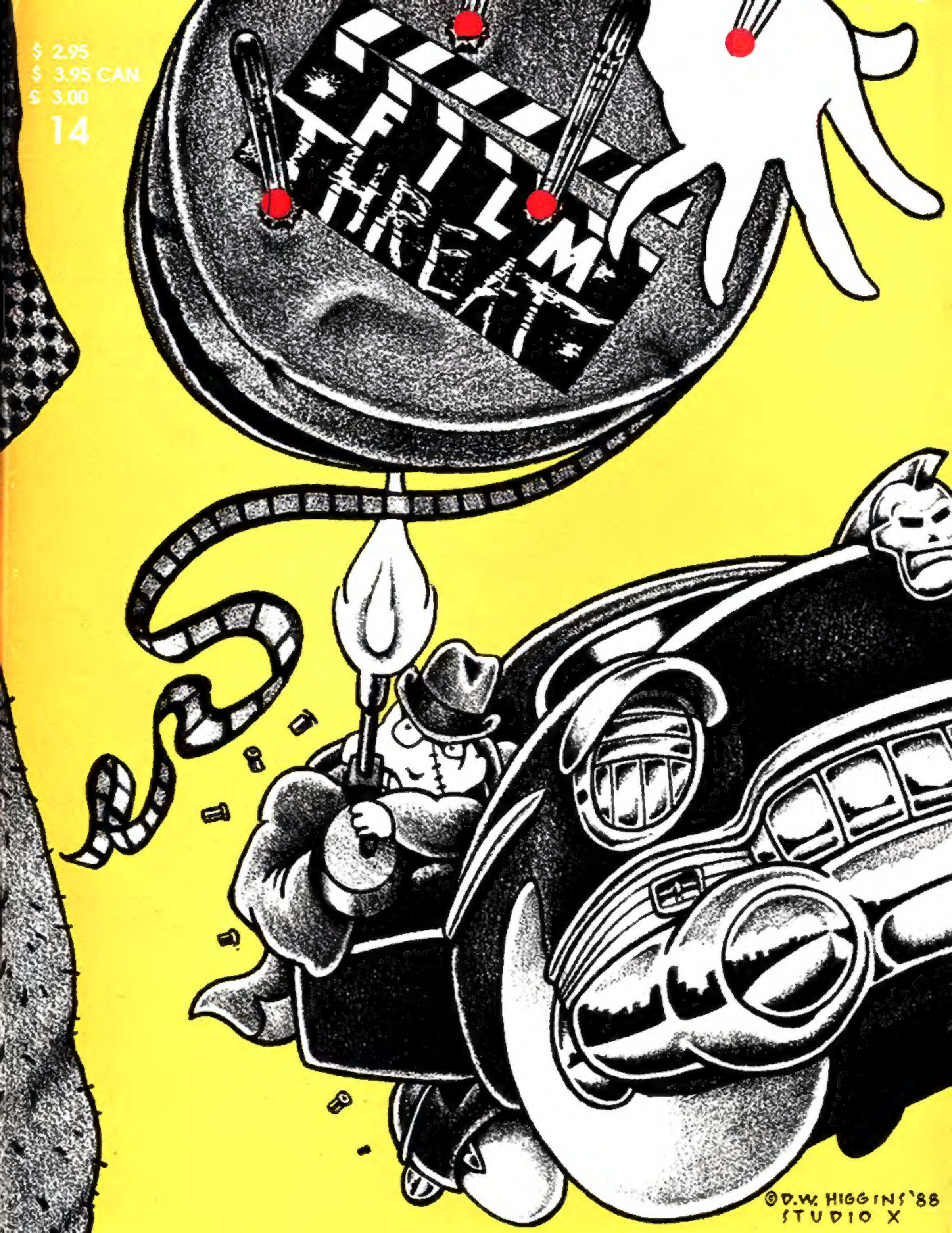


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INDICIA

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HATE MAIL

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HATE MAIL gives readers a
chance to sound off. Try it, I
dare you! Letters to the Editor:
P.O. BOX 951, Royal Oak, MI
48068 USA



I received this letter along with a photo. You
guys are pretty stupid. Marilyn Monroe's
already dead. If you mean something else by
"Gets It" than you can hate her. Necrophilia is
not one of my favorite sexual variations.

ANOTHER ZEDD HATER

Dear Film Threat,
Shame on you for giving so much space to that dirty
little thug Nick Zedd. This is not a real filmmaker- he's
a scummy little pervert trying to corrupt and destroy
everything decent and gentle in our godforsaken world.
Why don't you pay some attention to the films of
Betty Gordon, Yvonne Rainer, Sara Driver, Stan Brakhage
or Chantal Akerman, all legitimate directors recognized
with many well earned grants and awards over the years.
The AFI, NYSCA, and The National Endowment For The Arts
don't give grants to just anybody, you know.
Irresponsible to promote the kind of vicious violence
in the head for criminals like Nick Zedd and has made our so-
ciety that leads directly to AIDS and has made our so-
ciety the wicked unchristian disgrace that it is today.
Stop printing his bad writing in your magazine and
maybe I'll start reading you again.

Yours Truly,

Manuel "Cricket" DeLanhard

Manuel, the number of letters complaining
about Zedd were uncountable. The reason I'm
printing yours is because it's the shortest.

COMPLAIN, COMPLAIN

Dear Editor:

You definitely have something good started here in Michigan - the Cine-void desert that needs an exchange of signals on alternative film, "cool filmmakers, art, books, anarchy-philosophy, punk rock..." Why the hell then in every other issue since you started you have some shit that we all have read in every film effects, super-8 and horror zine that exists, on all-ready washed-up and boringized fucking Sam Raimi. I thought that a rich kid turned Furdale mogul would turn your guts. But no, your right down there with the rest, sucking Sam dry, per usual. Then your next mag comes out (#12) and he's there again, as a "Famous Extra". Yup you gave us the real story, and the only way you could get that was to talk to the little people - sure. Get serious about alternative art and media, Gore, don't let your potentially good mag go MOR after the first few issues. I thought it was for the jaded moviegoer. Sam showed us what he's really all about in Crisewave, a piece of shit-period. I do understand that it is important for us Jaded to stay in touch with the mainstream but I can read a lame publication like American Film if I want that kind of shit, and believe me they were through with Sam years ago. You will definitely hear more from me in the future, boy I just can't wait to read Sam's latest interview your next issue.

E
E. Villa
Lansing, MI

I must admit, Raimi's films are a guilty pleasure for me. But all you have to do is turn the page. Also, fake names and no return addresses are reserved for chickenshits like yourself.

CHILDISH LETTER

November 23, 1987

To all 'complete loudmouthed mother-fucking bastards' concerned,

I expected your magazine to be impudent, irreverent, and interesting - full of great articles about cult films. Not that some of it isn't informative, but you are obviously acting obnoxious for the sake of acting obnoxious. For example, page 32 of issue #13. Believe it or not, it is possible to produce an intelligent cult film magazine. Childish behavior has lost you a potential subscriber.

And now, in language you will understand, I would like to give Joe Hutchinson fair, though undeserved, warning: Don't stop at any small roadside motels. And stay out of the shower. I don't think Mother likes you.

N.B.

Okay, you're right. I admit it. I'm childish.

THOUGHTFUL INSIGHT OR CONFESSION FROM A PEDERASTER

Dear Film Threat,

Maybe if you posed a real threat to anybody, you would get some real hate mail. Just who are you a threat to, people who want to watch movies about real human beings who's lives, and deaths count for something? If anything, the film underground so acutely covered, and criticized in Film Threat is a byproduct of the mainstream, not a force against it. It's the same absence of feeling, and coherence, and right, and wrong. Old Walt Disney movies had more meaningful sex, and violence. Like, mass murderers, old slobs who omit 9/10 of the truth because it isn't colorful enough, and jerks who would be pulling some really major head trips if anybody was stupid enough to bother with them, are so profound.

Love,

Torky Koenings

RAMBLING LETTER

December
1987

DEAR Threat-

If you must please send me my 1st issue immediately, and put me down for the Special Issue 1 Year deal. I would send the Ad. for I only know my lib's Film Comment (usually pretentious shit, but like the most professors) I have for it up.

Your name is great but too hardcore - unless the whole point is to offend - so go ahead, raise terror in the medium - it needs it - have you seen 3rd and a baby? Plans to ruin and assassinate? New Spotlight?

TRASH, TRASH, Shit, GARBAGE that insane fat peacock and audiences love!! Kill them, trash their sorry fantasies - Hail to Bukowski and Schroeder for BARFLY, the best installment of intelligent film to reach these putrid backwaters of Ripart conversation in years.

I hate Hollywood, I Love Hawk. please fulfill these wishes!

You aren't just a flack of Columbia Pictures are you? Who are your executives? Do you sell stock? Are you truly Audacious? Will you say anything about anyone, anything? Are you truly a Cult Mag? (as dumb as a cat phase as your clock rule) or just another kind of pretension?

Don't tell me, just show me your MAG. And I'll tell you -

Hail,

EDWARD

Please, if you want me to answer your letter don't ramble on incoherently like this idiot.

SUBSCRIBER COMPLAINS

Dear Chris, It was such a surprise to see a full-page ad for Film Threat appearing in the latest Film Comment, especially since I haven't received the first issue of a subscription I ordered in late July

Thanks loads,
Steve Rosen

Steve, do you think I paid for that ad? Even if I did pay for it, do you think the check would be good?

FAITHFUL READER STUCK IN PRISON

DEC 16, 1987

MR Gore

I dug that I got the magazine. I have to wait till January for the \$15 dollars for Film Threat. I'm out of money right now. but I get Twenty-Five a month. Swell magazine. Well Si I see the grants are a dead thing. It's all Fucked up! My women is strong out on drugs. I was strong out. But I know I should make "Son of Hideous Sun demon". For real! I got big time for some stuff I didn't even do. I really didn't but I have to adjust. Till I beat my case in court. It's still in there bring handout. So until next month Oh if I could just eat her Pissy

George Wright N-23343
2600 Brinton Ave.
Dixon, Illinois 61021

I Just love the way the camera sounds while you're filming. That's it! Film Friend

George sent me a letter asking about grants for films. We all know the U.S. can't afford art welfare. Send this guy some mail or money. I'd really like to see "Son of Hideous Sun Demon" myself.



Selling Out

A lot of you may have noticed a full page advertisement for Film Threat in Film Comment, or two consecutive issues of Premiere magazine that contained 1/4 page ads for Film Threat. Some people who are reading this magazine right now probably subscribed through those ads. How did those get there? Am I rich? (I live in a part of Detroit known as the "War Zone". It's fun. Almost the entire city is a squat, abandoned buildings where homeless people dwell, but this has nothing to do with my original point so why are you reading this?) Have I sold out? No. I'm just great at talking unsuspecting ad reps for big magazines into giving me credit to pay for ads. How great am I at talking people into things they don't want? Either you subscribed to this mag and are reading it, or you bought it off the rack and are reading it, or you are a cheapskate and are reading this stupid editorial in a store. In any case, none of those ads are even paid for. Why? Because I wanted you to find out about this magazine and would risk jail to do so. It's that important to me for you to find out about all the exciting films coming out that can't be seen on the *forever-shrinking* big screen.

Independence

What is this magazine about really? Yes there are articles on cult films, underground films, and lost films, but this magazine is also here to give exposure to small independents. Filmmakers who aren't pretentious enough to be written about in The Independent. Or films that may or may not be politically correct enough for Cineaste or Film Comment. How can I find out about these films? The only way is if you tell me.

Media Literacy

This magazine is also dedicated to bringing about an awareness of the blatant manipulation and sometimes hilarious drama portrayed in the media. Think of media-illiteracy in the same way as a person who cannot read a book; someone who cannot read images. A media-literate person is at a much greater advantage for the simple fact that this person has the option of choice. The choice to not be influenced by advertising or Oliver North.

Goodbuy until next issue,

Gore

The Truth

The truth is I just got a backer which means this magazine will finally come out on time, every two months. My deal means I have full creative control of the mag, my investor, Bill, an old hippie, takes care of all my finances and keeps me out of jail. I also don't care about all your opinions or independent film or all that shit. This is not a magazine about cult or underground, it's about things I like. Things that I find interesting. For instance, the Jello Biafra interview really has nothing to do with movies, but I like his stuff so if I want to do an article on him, I will. Media-Literacy really means finding news programs the blatantly funny dramas that they really are. Why is this in such small print? The truth always is, read between the lines in everything and tell me what you find. You'll find out everything you wanted to know, and maybe something you didn't want to know. By the way, I still haven't paid for those ads.





FAMOUS EXTRAS, the section where extras from BIG films are featured. If you were an extra and you've got a story to tell, write us and let us in on the scoop. PO BOX 951, ROYAL OAK, MI, 48068



Mr. Jello Biafra, lead singer of the DEAD KENNEDYS and porn merchant according to the Los Angeles city attorney's office. The H.R. Giger poster contained in the DK's album FRANK-ENCHRIST was deemed "harmful to minors" and the L.A. city attorney tried to set a precedent by charging Biafra and putting his record company, Alternative Tentacles, out of business. They lost.

Now things are looking up for the ex-leader of the now defunct band. His spoken word tour is guaranteed to bring brain cells boiling to the surface of any redneck, right wing Republican, and look for the spoken word album, NO MORE COCOONS. Besides his anarchistic recording activities, he has now taken up acting. Will film be the next medium in which Jello will cause havoc? Read on...



You played an F.B.I. agent in Michael Nesmith's new movie TAPEHEADS, did you have trouble playing an authority figure?

Well, I suppose I did in a way because it was all new to me, because I had auditioned for the part of the hit man. The plot of the movie is there's these two guys played by John Cusak and Tim Robbins, who are these bumbling aspiring video tycoons who want to get on MTV and wind up making all these hilariously bad videos as a result. In the meantime a person who is about to get killed slips them a video tape of this right-wing politician running for president doing lewd things with his maid in the bedroom, and when the politician finds out they have the tape he tries to have them killed. I originally tried out for the part of one of those hit men and wound up being the F.B.I. guy in the end who ironically busts Cusak and Robbins for trafficking and pornography.

LAUGH

It was all kind of fascinating and new to me, I'd done stage acting before I'd done DEAD KENNEDYS, but this was the first thing I'd done like it since.

How is acting in front of the camera different than performing on stage?

At first I had a harder time zoning in on it, there was a real upbeat, party kind of an atmosphere on the set, to keep everybody loose and so I wasn't giving a lot of concentration to my character. Luckily both the lead actor and the other F.B.I. guy were very helpful in telling me what was about to happen and what to expect. It was basically trying to zero in on my 10-15 second of fame. CUT! Then having to do the whole thing again.

What other roles have you had in films?

A friend of mine John Greenway, who co-wrote the song California Uber-Allies, he and I have been close friends since about fifth grade, we grew to weird and weirder as the rest of the school grew up, anyway he began making super 8 films when we were 14 or 15, he made one that I wasn't in called ATTACK OF THE INVISIBLE REDNECKS, and another one called CRIME IN THE STREETS, where me and my friend Sam play burglars and Sam was the tough guy and I was the bumbler, trying to burglarize John's house, he might have even put his mom in that movie, I don't remember.

Then there was the sequel to ATTACK OF THE KILLER REDNECKS where the ghost of FRITZ THE FREAK, we were all hippies then keep in mind this is '74, comes back and attacks the son of the Governor of Colorado. I played his son and wore these checkered pants while Fritz the

freak attacked me. Of course, this is a no budget movie so the ghost was simply somebody running around with a sheet over their head. Then later on I was supposed to be on a yacht on Grand Lake but we couldn't go to Grand Lake because we didn't have any money for gas, so we filled up John's bathtub and all we could find for a boat was some plastic container that a bottle of perfume had come in, so we put a firecracker in that and blew up the boat and that was the end to the movie, so much for special effects. There's another, my favorite called PROUD MADNESS where I'm fishing in the toilet. First I catch a piece of shit for which we sacrificed a potatoe, I throw that back. Then I start catching these Japanese like fish, I put them in the oven and they come out and attack me and I have to call in a Kung Fu hero to save me. The funny thing is after years of these films being lost, John moves back to Boulder, dug them up again and showed them at a gathering of local art film buffs and people who were into Stan Brackhage types of things and they were all in awe of these films and it was just a bunch of teenagers goofing around. Something people spend years in art school trying to duplicate.

One other one that never came out was done by David Swan who has a band here called the Long Shoreman, he made a film that has never been edited and finished called WEEKEND HIPPIE, about these armchair beatniks and hippies and I play a charlatan guru.

Let's talk about the court case, were you acquitted?

It was thrown out of court, it ended in a hung jury, and of course, under American law a jury has to agree unanimously, guilty or innocent. And the jury, much to my pleasant surprise, deadlocked 7-5 in favor of acquittal. I figured we were only going to reach one or two of them at the most. When you have a hung jury the judge declares a mistrial and then the prosecutor makes a motion for a new trial, which our prosecutor did, and boy was I shitting in the pants of my court suit at that point. But thankfully the judge felt he could experiment with the law somewhere else and dismissed the charges, although she also hinted it had been up to her, she would have convicted us.

What would have happened, had you been convicted?

The maximum penalty was a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine, but what the prosecutor had in mind was actually much worse, he wanted to put me on probation in such a way that I would be unable to perform or record any music, and probably couldn't do any spoken word performances or acting either. In other words he wanted to deprive me of being able to make a living.

The funny thing is after years of these films being lost, John moves back to Boulder, dug them up again and showed them at a gathering of local art film buffs and people who were into Stan Brackhage types of things and they were all in awe of these films and it was just a bunch of teenagers goofing around. Something people spend years in art school trying to duplicate.

How much were your legal fees?

Around \$80,000.

Hope you sell a lot of records.

That's actually quite low for a case like this, if we had gone with high-budget Hollywood lawyers it would've been half a million bucks. Most of the attorneys were willing to cut their fees way down, if not, wave them entirely and do it for expenses, they had to hire outside clerks to do research, and fly back and forth from L.A. and the phone bills were astronomical as well, which is why we wound up founding the No More Censorship Defense Fund. To put it mildly, if it hadn't been for the people who contributed to the defense fund, well as the saying goes, "We couldn't have done it without you!" The saddest part was that the people who contributed to the fund were the people who could least afford it. We got next to no help from the straight music industry what so ever, only Frank Zappa and Stevie Nicks really stuck their necks out. Otherwise it was mainly the underground bands, ranging from Adrenalin to Firehose. They were even doing benefits, there were at least two in Detroit, one with the Blanks and the Layabouts and one was with Inside Out and the Trash Brats, Forced Anger and a couple of others. A lot of people, I mean, you could tell from the notebook paper and the letters these were younger kids sending in allowance money who probably had never given anything away before in their lives and that was very touching in a way and I hope we can make it all back.

At least it wasn't old ladies, about to have their heat turned off, sending it to Jesus. What do you think it means for yourself and other artists now that the prosecution has failed in its attempt to stifle you?

Well, the prosecutor filed the charges primarily as a self-serving publicity stunt. I don't think he really gave a damn about saving all the poor little kids from wicked H.R. Giger posters inside Dead Kennedys' albums. His idea of saving all the poor innocent children was circulating airbrushed photos of himself to the local media and getting to know tv reporters on a first name basis. He handled his own press relations so badly that I suspect he set his political career back five years. What it meant for the rest of us was a pretty negative message especially for the retailers, in our case they charged me, the artist, the record company, another person who worked at our record company, Alternative Tentacles, who had quit after the police raid and wasn't even working for us at the time the charges were filed, they charged the record distributor, and even a 67 year-old man who owned the record pressing plant that pressed the vinyl and collated the packaging. You'll notice there's a gaping hole in this chain, they didn't charge the record store who sold the record to the kid. And the prosecutor justified this by saying, "Well they were co-operative in taking Dead Kennedys off the shelves."

In other words, the legal precedent they are trying to set if they can convict any one of these people is to say "Hey if you even so much as run out and get coffee for the director of a film that later gets an X rating slapped on it, we can throw you in the can."

The store in question is part of the Wherehouse chain, the largest record store chain in California, so obviously an under the table deal may have been made or at least an understanding. They took all the Dead Kennedys records ever made out of their stores permanently and many other stores across the country have done the same. So it's blown a great big hole in our side as far as being able to make a living. This is part of what the prosecutor had in mind. He openly admitted that one of his goals was to put Alternative Tentacles out of business, in hopes that all of our records would go out of print, and that way he would have wound up censoring us without having to actually do the dirty work. What it sent out was one hell of a chill factor that if you make something controversial that might offend certain highbrows in the L.A. Police Department we'll go out of our way to try to wreck you economically so you best not say this kind of thing at all. One of about half a dozen cases they designed to bend the law in such a way that if a distributor of a film, or a record, or a booklet, if anybody so much as touches the damn thing they can be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, this is the precedent they wanted to set. Up until now, correct me if I'm wrong, all successful prosecutions of films have been against the theater, rather than the distributor or the director.

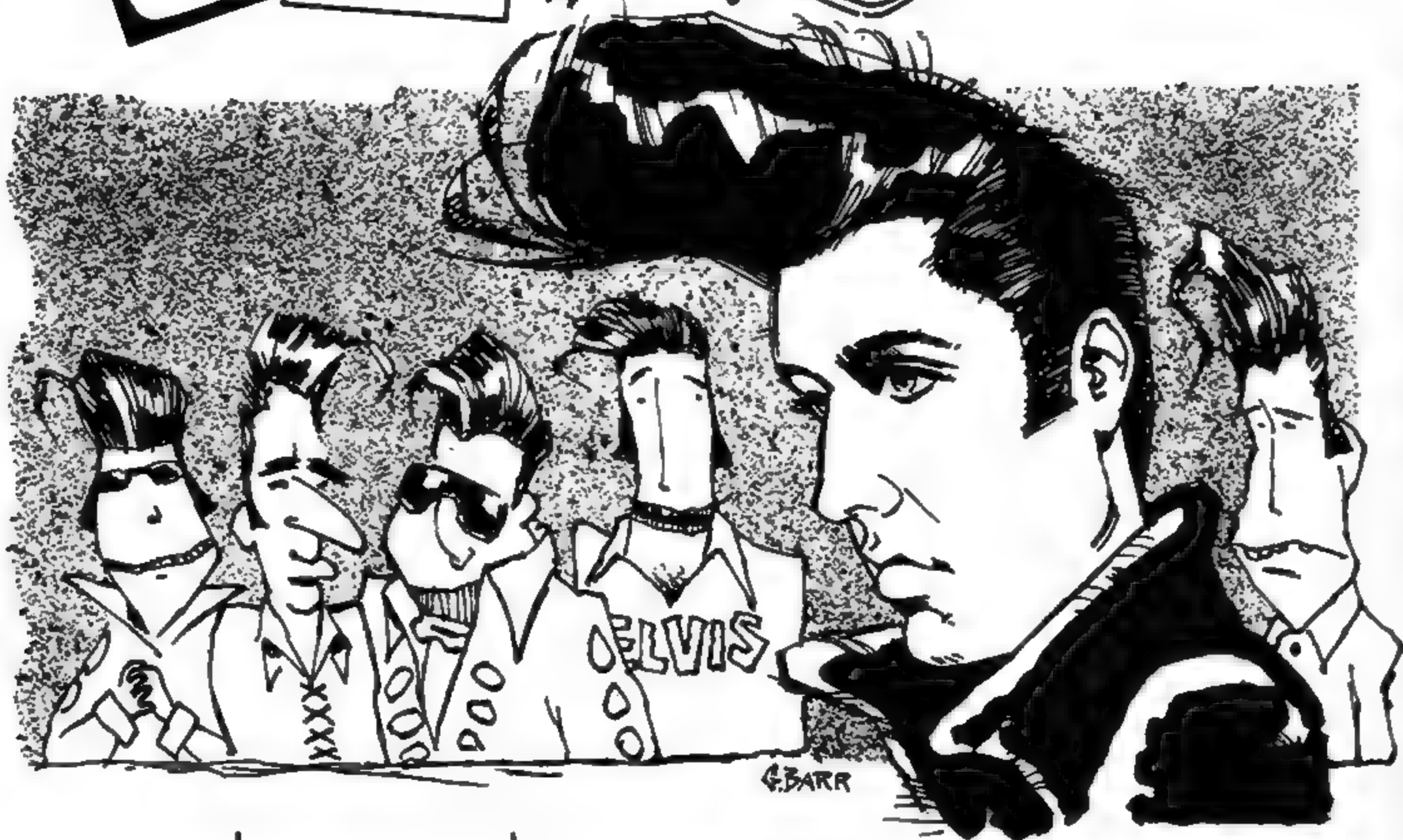
What they're doing in L.A. is they're prosecuting one film for pornography, even though there's no nude scenes in the entire film, claiming that it's sadistic, and BACKSIDE TO THE FUTURE. The district attorney has charged the producer, the director, all the actors, all the actresses, a modelling agent and even some guy who loaned his house out as a set for one day. All the actors and actresses are charged with prostitution. The director, the producer, and the guy who loaned his house out are all charged with pandering, which is a mandatory 3 year sentence in the State Prison. In other words, the legal precedent they are trying to set if they can convict any one of these people is to say "Hey if you even so much as run out and get coffee for the director of a film that later gets an X rating slapped on it, we can throw you in the can." If this goes through it's gonna be harder than hell to assemble a cast and crew for any kind of film that might wind up being controversial.

I know that it is illegal to make porno films, because it's a form of prostitution, however, it's not illegal to sell them, you have to get caught making one, it's ironic, like catch-22.

This interview continues next issue when we talk about banned films, kitchen table Marxists & the best weapons for an artist.

... all successful prosecutions of films have been against the theater, rather than the distributor or the director.

ELVIS:



Underground movies about the King

The only human being that ever looked good in bell-bottoms was Elvis. Forget all of his accomplishments in the record business or movies, those sequined bells alone will engrave him a place in the history books. He made 29 pictures in Hollywood, always playing the same part: a race car driver-who sang, a ghetto doctor-who sang, an ex-con-who sang, a rebel rocker-who sang, a singer-who sang; you get the idea. Unsatisfied with his career, Elvis left Hollywood for Vegas. There he scaled the charts and tipped the scales.

After his untimely death in one of Graceland's bathrooms, there came a barrage of TV movies with everyone from Don Johnson to Kurt Russell playing the King. Here we present an overview of the films about Elvis that have escaped notice for their startling truth, shocking realism, or just plain bad taste.

C.G.

ELVIS DOG

Nick Canterucci's super 8 film puts the King in a new perspective. He is reincarnated as a dog and goes on tour. The film is a fake commercial for Elvis Dog's upcoming tour. Nick has this to say:

"I had more trouble with my film Elvis Dog. I showed it in Memphis at a benefit for one of the radio stations. Elvis is a very big industry to this day. I had people come up to me, the baptists and Elvis Fanatics, and they said, 'You're going to burn in hell for this. Elvis is going to come back and smash you because you've desecrated his memory.' If anything I put Elvis out even further. It's like a cult down there, like the Manson fanatics, they were ready to crucify me. One of them said he was going to give me a lobotomy. It's like a religion now, they're trying to get his birthday as a national holiday and they're trying to get a stamp issued, Elvis Presley-America's first Rock 'n Roll Saint. It's moronic."

MONDO ELVIS

Also known as Rock 'n Roll Disciples, this half hour video documentary is available through Rhino records and has been shown on cable. Produced and directed by Thomas Colby, this video expose' features interviews with the hardcore believers.

"When I first heard about it I was in New Jersey, I got a phone call, I left immediately for Memphis. I had no idea what I was doing. I wouldn't have been anywhere else. I felt like I lost a member of my family, I felt this terrific void in my life. You always thought of Elvis as living forever, you never figured that he'd ever die, and uh... tremendous emptiness in my heart, and it's five years later and it's just as hard as it was five years ago." So says Frankie "Buttons" Harrock a woman whose husband divorced her for excessive devotion to Elvis.

Artie Mentz, an Elvis impersonator goes on to say, "Well, I was real stunned, it's something that you think is never gonna happen, and it's kinda' like being a duplicate now without an original. I impersonate Elvis 'cause he was my idol, a person who I looked up to and for me to get on stage and do his music and to resemble a man as great as Elvis, that's my ambition and that's why I like to be called an impersonator rather than an imitator. I don't imitate Elvis, I don't try to be Elvis, I just do his music and dress in the style in which he did."

Jenny and Judy Carroll believe they are Elvis' illegitimate daughters. "I think our lives and Elvis', there happen to be a lot of coincidences, the fact that Elvis Presley is a twin and his brother died at birth, and the fact that we're identical twins and I almost died at birth, I was stillborn."

"Buttons" goes on, "November 14, 1966 I saw BLUE HAWAII and I fell in love and I was a newlywed ... huh... and I told my husband I wanted a divorce, 'cause I was in love and it wasn't with him."

The twins continue, "Sometimes we bring people home, don't get the wrong idea, but we bring people home, guys mainly 'cause we don't get along with... and when we bring 'em home and they're all set and ready to go hop in the sack and we put on our Elvis Presley music and then we pull out a game of Yahtzee and if they don't like our Elvis Presley music then they get thrown out on their ass. And if they say anything against God or Elvis Presley, they get thrown out on their ass again. Now if they think they're gonna get lucky they're wrong, because we sit down, have a nice little game of Yahtzee and after the first round they get up and leave. All the kids used to make fun of us, I mean they used to call us different names, just like they did to Elvis Presley, but I got news for you, look where Elvis is now, I mean, he's the King of rock 'n roll. All those people who ever laughed at Elvis are wishin' they never did now, just like us. I mean, we're not anywhere specific yet but after school we'll know who we are when we get out there in life and what we're gonna do... I think Elvis is definitely our father, we have his features, we have his eyes, we even have his little cut-off lips here, but we asked our mother on several occasions and she never said, no, then again she never said, yes."

Frankie talks about her divorce, "When I went to Hawaii to see Elvis he said, 'You're insane, you need to be put away, you're a sick woman,' and I said, 'If this is sick, I never want to get better, I want to stay in critical condition for the rest of my life.' And he filed for a divorce and I remember item number 2, excessive devotion to Elvis Presley and I said, 'I love it!' He was somebody who took up 99% of my time, and my money. And yet the thought of killing myself never, never crossed my mind. Never. And I don't understand that. And at the same time I can't imagine what life would be like without Elvis, I couldn't imagine it, I sat there and thought, what do we do now? And I wasn't the only one, we all stood at the gate, y'know, before the big throng of people got there. What are we gonna do? How are we gonna live? Y'know, he's gone... Any normal red-blooded American woman that loves him is a liar if she said that she would not want to go to bed with Elvis Presley, I'm sorry. Um... I met a woman who said, we were discussing this one day and given the opportunity of making love to Elvis or having him sing to her, she would want him to sing to her and I looked at her and I said, 'Your sick.' Personally I'd want him to sing while he was makin' love but if I had any choice there's no way I would choose the singin' over the screwin' any day."

A hefty woman stands outside the Graceland holding an 8 x 10 color photo of people standing outside the gate on a cloudy day. "On August 16th, 1978 on the first anniversary of Elvis' death, I was in Memphis. And on that day between 11 and 2 they closed the gates at Graceland, just for a couple of hours, so they could have a private memorial for Elvis. Well, at that time, none of us fans were allowed to go up to the grave so we were just hanging out outside of the gate. At that time I was just indiscriminantly taking pictures and I had all my film developed and months later I was looking through my album and I came across the Cloud. And ... uh ... it really looks like Elvis. I guess in a way this just testifies to the fact that Elvis was watching what was going on at Graceland."

During the stout woman's testimonial, a song can be heard:

*O the King lives on forever,
Through his pictures and his songs.
And the world keeps on the memory,
Like nothin's even wrong.
And he saved 10 million people,
Play the songs he left behind.
Yes the King lives on forever,
In our hearts and in our minds.
He gave us everything,
That he had to give.
Even though he didn't like,
The way he had to live.
He's the number one attraction,
Everywhere you go.
If you ever get to Heaven,
You can see his show.*

Congressman Harold Ford is seen giving a speech, "Elvis was the embodiment of the American Dream, the classic rags to riches story, his music and his death, at the time, was embedded in the American heritage. I, as a congressperson from the Mississippi area and Tennessee, gladly join with my colleagues in the Congress in co-sponsoring resolution 296, a resolution designating, January 8th, 1983 as a National Elvis Presley Day in this nation."

The Elvis song continues and we see some of the products at a souvenir shop outside of Graceland; Elvis' sweat, dirt from Graceland, meet Elvis' dog - only \$1. At an auction an autographed Elvis photo goes for \$500.

"Buttons" goes on to talk about how Elvis affected her family, "Phoebe (her youngest daughter) was closer to me because she understood and she was somebody I could share him with. My other two kids weren't interested. Y'know if she were alive, she'd be here with me, there would've been no question of whether she would've transferred schools or not. And Saturday's a day I'm not really looking forward to, it's hard enough that it's his birthday but it's also her birthday. Which comes up as ironic, that she would be born on his birthday... I asked her what she wanted for her birthday and she said, 'Oh, mommy, I want to go see Elvis.' And I took her and he took her up on stage and he held her on his knee and he kissed her and he put a scarf around her neck and from that time on she would not let me wash that dress and I kept the scarf and still have it, but I buried her in the dress... and I had Elvis music played at my daughter's funeral, because it was appropriate. She loved him and why not. I buried her with a copy of Burning Love in her hands and my family freaked out."

What makes this video documentary excellent is the fact that it makes no judgements about the people being interviewed. There is no narrator to tell you what to think of these people, that decision is left up to the viewer. These excerpts speak for themselves. I actually became very fond of all of them and decided to repaint my plaster Elvis bust.

Ellie Mentz, wife of Artie (Elvis Imitator) Mentz sums the film up by saying, "When you change the letters to Elvis' name around, it appears to mean live and to me, that means that Elvis will always be there no matter what, even though he's been gone for so many years, it just seems like he's still with us and always shall be."

DER ELVIS

The Council of Prentious Artists Presents: A film by Jon Moritsugo. So starts DER ELVIS and pretentious it is! An art-school-experimental-abstract offering, this film must be seen if only for the scene of an overly intellectualized writer who pontificates his views about Elvis and bases everything on his brief encounter with the King.

"I first met Elvis in 1974 at a concert in a coliseum in L.A. I was introduced to him by a writer friend of mine, I shook hands with him, his handshake was amazingly weak and his hands were covered with perspiration and sweat. He stayed for about 10 minutes and then his bodyguards took him back into the hotel. Elvis was America's greatest creation, he was pure Americana, a sort of distillation of Hollywood, showbiz, drugs, promotion, rock music, and capitalism in the Horatio Alger, dirt to diamonds mold. I think there are a number of similarities between the Elvis phenomenon in the early 1970's and the punk or hardcore phenomenon today. Particularly if you think of the nihilism and ecstatic self-destruction that those groups take up. Elvis is, in many respects, very like Sid Vicious. And I think that his death by a drug overdose was echoed by Sid Vicious' death from a heroin overdose a couple of years later."

This 16mm, non-narrative, continues in its disjointed style, mixing footage from THIS IS ELVIS with facts/lies about the King given in subtitles at the bottom of the screen. Any film student is bound to read lots of meaning into this abstract film and I'll bet it wins an award at some New York festival. In any case, I enjoyed this film's sick sense of humor and was delighted to find myself with a free blank video tape when I was done watching it. Thanks Jon!

ELVIS APOCALYPSO

Ken Sylvester's 16mm opus is a tribute to the Elvis and it makes me want to put on an old pair of bell bottoms. We see Elvis die in front of the dumper, on his bathroom floor, as he makes his way to hell. He complains to Satan, who he has a deal with, "Hell, I ain't even a Senator yet!" Satan gives the King 72 hours on earth to make progress. Elvis tries to take over. Mindless followers, with Jim Jones-like precision, chant "HUNK-A, HUNK-A BURNIN' LOVE, HUNK-A, HUNK-A BURNIN' LOVE," as he finishes off a plate of popsicles (and cleans out Ken's fridge). It's my personal favorite and the best independent film made about the King.

Give me some background on the film, this was a project for film school that tried to capitalize and make money off Elvis?

This was my big project for school my senior year so I took the production class and I was chosen to direct one of the movies, so we used my script. I've always been a big Elvis fan and I just had this inspiration once of Elvis falling in the bathroom and dying, what would happen if he came back from the dead? He'd try to rule the world, that's what would happen, try and take over. That's the story of the movie but it also has some observations on popculture, disposable pop culture, which is what Rock n' Roll is and what Elvis is too. Especially now that he is dead.



Dick as the power-hungry-back-from-the-grave Elvis.

So you're an Elvis fan?

Definitely.

What are some of the most unusual pieces of Elvis memorabilia you've ever seen, or that you personally own?

I own Elvis slippers, big plastic heads on these blue plush slippers, Elvis clock, I don't have any real original stuff that's worth money, I just got a bunch of shit you buy in Memphis. I've got *Love Me Tender Bubble Bath* and moisturizing creme. Trays with Elvis' face on it that you could have anything on but they just print Elvis on it and sell it for \$8.

What stuff did you see that you don't have, but would like to own?

Ceramic coffee cups.

What would be your dream piece of Elvis memorabilia?

Graceland.

LAUGH

Elvis' motorcycle, one of his suits. *Love Me Tender* Condoms.

You told me earlier some strange occurrences transpired on the set of the movie, what happened?

Some very strange things happened, I'm generally not the type that believes in superstitious things, or ghosts, or things like that, but a lot of weird things happened. Some very strange coincidences. If you look at the movie, some people might think it's a put down of Elvis, but it's not because I'm a really big Elvis fan, and there's plenty of people out there who say they liked Elvis when he was young, but I like Elvis till he died. I think he was as great in Las Vegas as he was early on. I get mad when I see people write about how tacky he was or make fun of his weight, I mean he was just a person. But anyways... how did I get off on this? The strange occurrences... would Elvis have wanted this film made? Would Elvis have tried



Elvis related items including Love Me Tender bubble bath, an Elvis doll, Elvis socks, Elvis wine, and blue plush Elvis slippers.

to stop this film from being made if he was alive, but he's dead, so maybe his ghost had something to do with it. It seemed as if someone was against getting this movie made. For instance I got very ill just before I was about to go into production, I got tuberculosis. Believe it or not it's still out there, but they cure it nowadays. I had to go into the hospital 2 weeks before I shot the movie. I got a huge hole in my lung and they finally diagnosed it. Maybe Elvis was trying to kill me? That's just preproduction, I get out of the hospital a week later, we were shooting in an apartment and we blew some power and we had to go down to the basement to turn the power back on and the landlady locked the door. She wouldn't open the door for us, she was this crazy alcoholic woman and she would not cooperate, she thought we were making dirty movies. We had to call the police and make her open the basement door to let us turn the power back on. She caused us a lot of trouble all through production.

Was she an Elvis fan?

The strange thing was her name was Gladys (Elvis' mom's name-Ed.). That same day we took hundreds of posters and plastered the whole wall and one of the posters shows Elvis ascending the steps to heaven through the clouds and Hank Williams is coming downstairs with his hand outstretched to greet him. It's a horrible oil painting. So we're taking a break and we're talking and the guy who plays Elvis, Dick, not Elvis' dick, Dick who plays Elvis Presley, was talking and just in mid-sentence, just as he said the word hell, we heard a loud noise, and it was that poster that fell off the wall. Out of all the posters of Elvis' face it's that poster, of him ascending to heaven that falls. Shortly after a light blew, a mole-richardson light, it fell and just missed Dick's head. It would've split his head open. Just missed him.

Do you believe Elvis' ghost was trying to halt production of Elvis Apocalypse ?

I don't believe in ghosts but I've told these stories to several people who are quite convinced that something strange was happening that could not be explained. I figured if



Ken Sylvester at the wall around Graceland where someone has spray painted Elvis Apocalypse. Coincidentally the name of his film.

Elvis was against the film, the footage would have come out black but it didn't, so I guess he decided that my intentions were good, so he let the film turn out.

What else happened?

Well, the day before production we had this huge ceramic Elvis bust that was overlooking my bed and I had horrible nightmares all night.

What other things have you done?

When I got out of school I worked for a film caterer, we catered films and commercials, in fact Dick, the guy who played Elvis, ran the catering service. We worked on *Wise Guys* which is a Brian DePalma movie and

the thing I remember about that was when you cater a movie everyone comes in and helps themselves and eats off the paper plates -er whatever, but this real thin woman, who was Brian DePalma's aid, she came up with a paper bag and produced a ceramic fiesta-ware plate and metal fork and knife and said, "Mr. DePalma's ready for his food."

What kind of food did you guys usually serve?

It was out of a really nice restaurant so if it's bad food the unions gripe about it and you'll never work again.

Yeah, but what kind of food?

Chicken, are you hungry is that why you're asking me-



Ken directing (puking?) on the streets of New York.

Yeah, is that why all the big directors get real fat because of all these good caterers?

Most directors don't even eat most catered food.

Why?

Too high strung and tense to even eat, when you're directing a movie. I threw up the first day. I'd eat a piece of pizza and it would come right back up. I was so nervous 'cause I had all this equipment out on the streets of New York City and tons of people all around and trying to get shit done and plus you've been drinking coffee all morning.

Tell me about your role in the film.

The night before the first day of shooting about one in the morning I was talking to my actor and he backed out. And I couldn't put off the production I had everything, the locations and the equipment secured and the props and the people and I was the only person who knew the script and I sort'a fit the role but it's hard to direct yourself and act at the same time. But Elvis and Satan are such great actors they carry the film.

Have I seen Satan in any other films?

When I met him he was playing a bum in another film and I saw he was perfect for it, big Black bald guy with a goatee. He works on the Staten Island Ferry, that's his real job. He does acting on the side.

Did you pay him?

No, there's billions of actors in New York who will like take off their paying jobs to do student films for no pay. You can get actors who are in S.A.G. and A.F.T.R.A. to work in your student films for free. Supposedly you have to feed them but you can even get around that. . . .



Ken on Elvis' jet at Graceland.

THE DOORMAN

I don't know why I have to stand out here every night at eleven o'clock. Everybody knows that anybody who's anybody doesn't get here 'til midnight. Y'know when I started this job the hardest part was getting the Look. Y'know the attitude. It's so exciting letting in Andy and Sylvia and Mark. Anyway I've perfected this bored droll Look. It comes naturally. I'm BORED. I remember making a certain Chris Reeves wait a full hour before he could get in. Well let's face it. He's no Superman in real life, no style. I thought I'd make it in the columns with that one, but no! Six months at this door and not one mention of my name, anywhere.

DIANA

Tonight was a tough one but I made it. I know I look fabulous. It was close though, I could've sworn I had 365 dresses for the year when I went into my closet and there was nothing I hadn't worn before. I had to borrow this dress from Divine. Just a few quick alterations.

SEBASTIAN

This is it. This is the life. Parties, parties, parties. And my trust fund check, of course. But you know that money doesn't mean anything without the excitement, the glamour, the fame, and of course my picture in every gossip column. And y'know I can tell this is gonna be the hottest party, too, just by the invitations. Okay, let's get ready for the entrance.

MARK

That poor guy looked so upset because I didn't remember his name. I mean it's understandable. One mention in my column and I can make you somebody overnight. But with an attitude like Dan's he's not getting any farther than that front door. So much responsibility to have on one's shoulders. Not just anybody could handle it. But then again I'm not just anybody am I?

THE DOORMAN IS A 20 MINUTE 16MM FILM DIRECTED BY DEE D. BACHE'. IN THIS INTERVIEW SHE TALKS ABOUT HER INSPIRATION FOR THE FILM, PLAYING AN EXTRA IN A WOODY ALLEN MOVIE AND THE PRETENTIOUS INHABITANTS OF NYC'S MOST SICKENING CLUBS.

THE DOORMAN





The Doorman (Deen Kartel) almost accepts a bribe.

Chris Gore INTERVIEWS Dee D. Bache

THE DOORMAN takes a stab at NYC's trendy club scene. What drove you to make this scathing film?

I went and observed and it made me want to vomit. This whole thing with celebutants, which is a click of people that write about each other and create this myth that they are the IN people. It's so closed and obnoxious.

What is a *celebutante*?

A *celebutante* is someone who goes out to clubs every night and hang out with their crowd of eight people. The people who write the columns in New York.

Are these based on any real life people?

Yes, definitely.

Do you want to name them? I promise you won't get sued.

I know you want me to name them.

I'm not afraid of lawsuits, it's your quote.

I don't have anything they could take anyways. The character Diana is based loosely on Divine and Lisa E., a very flamboyant, big, celebutante, and Diana Brill.

How do you spell Diana Brill?

D-I-A-N-A B-R-I-L-L

You mean it's not pretentiously spelled like D-I-A-H-N-N-N-A.

Well what about your name, is it really Gore?

Gore is my real name.

Okay. Well, Mark is based on a gossip columnist, a combination of Michael Musto, who writes for the Village Voice, and all the gossip columnists?

Did you invite any of these people to your premiere?

Yeah, one showed up, and one walked out. Y'know the irony of the whole thing is I've shown my film at clubs in New York City I'll go in there and I'll say, "I've got this film and I want to show it." and they say, "Okay, we'll give you a free party." And then I show the film and it's a put down of the club scene. It can't be as bad in Detroit.

I could make my own version.

The last character, Sebastian, is based on the rich, bitch, kind of guy, who lives on his trust fund. I've got to tell you something funny, I ran into this guy Steven Seban, I saw him at this club and I said "Hi, how're you doin'?" And he goes, "Oh, I cut my finger." "Oh, too bad," but I was really thinking *big fucking deal*. "Well how did it happen?" And he goes, "I cut it on a hundred dollar bill in my pocket." And I said, "Oh, are you printing 'em at home now?" He was totally insulted. He didn't even laugh, he just walked away. How temperamental and pretentious. Which leads me to tell you the original concept for the film, there are like 6 or 8 people who are in a click who get into the V.I.P. lounge all the time. And one day the doorman is not at the door and they find out the doorman has gotten A.I.D.S. Then they all look around at each other and

realize that they're all related to the doorman sexually, one way or another, if not the doorman, with somebody else who has been with the doorman, or through, somebody else, who was with somebody else . . . like that.

That sounds like a great plot for a movie, or a Tennessee Williams stage play, if he were alive today. How did you get the money for the film?

I got a student loan and didn't spend the money on tuition. Then I worked at this laboratory and they gave me a deal on the print.

You told me earlier you've done some extra work?

Yeah, Woody Allen Project Number-

What is that?

Woody Allen never titles his films until after they are finished, he just numbers them.

How do you know?

I had a part in *STARDUST MEMORIES*.

A speaking role?

Yeah, but I got cut out, in fact today, just today, I got a residual check for \$30 for being in that film.



Celebutantes MARK (based on Michael Musto), SEBASTIAN, and DIANA (based on a combination of Divine, Diana Brill, and Lisa E.)



Dee D. Bache rests on C. B. DeMille's grave.

WOW! Tell me about it. I should've had you in my Famous Extras section.

Well there's a really weird story about that movie, the first half of the film was shot and there was a problem with the exposure, well the lab claimed it was Gordon Willis (the cinematographer) and Gordon Willis claimed it was the lab. So they had to go back and re-shoot under a smaller budget. I'm in the scene where everybody is in the field with all the air balloons.

I think it's his best, most personal film, even though it is a rip-off of 8 1/2. Fans look on it as a put-down but Woody Allen has been able to laugh at himself in movies for years and finally he gives his fans a chance to laugh at themselves. New projects?

I have two movies I'm doing right now, one in L.A. I'm making with Tommy Turner and it's about rock n' rollers being used as extras in Hollywood movies. It's the Hollywood idea of what a rock n' roller should be. I was an extra on *SLAMDANCE* and it was so ridiculous, it's the basis for this film I'm directing. They came out on Melrose and they rounded up all these down and out and they said, "Hey do you want fifty bucks to be an extra in this film." Wardrobe would say, "Oh, all wrong, put some streaks in his hair." The Hollywood concept versus reality. It'll be shot on super 8. It's called *SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK N' ROLL*. The feature I'm making is called *SEX IS LIKE CHINESE FOOD*. It's about this famous porno film star, the biggest in the business, no pun intended, he wants to give it all up and become a method actor. His

only problem is, where ever he goes, people recognize him. I want to shoot it soon because they're tearing down 42nd Street, which I think is one of the biggest crimes in New York City now, and I want to get it while there are still some theaters left.

●

SCENES FROM THE

Last CUTTING ROOM FLOOR Paul Paris

The scenes you see reprinted here were all filmed yet cut out. For obvious reasons, distributors were not prepared for a full frontal nude Brando (he probably wasn't either).

SCENE 13 INTERIOR: BEDROOM; DAY

They have been talking...

JEANNE The first time? I was late for school. I began running downhill. Suddenly I felt a strong sensation here. I came as I ran... then I ran faster and faster and the more I ran... the more I came. Two days later I tried running again, but... no dice!... Why don't you listen to me? You know, it seems to me I'm talking to the wall. Your solitude weighs on me, you know. It isn't indulgent or generous. You're an egoist... I can be myself too, you know.

The doorbell rings. Jeanne is surprised, as if that sound was impossible in this place. Paul goes to the door. He is about to open it.



VOICE (offscreen) The Bible complete . . . unique edition . . . without notes . . . without cuts . . .

Jeanne has leaped to stop Paul. The doorbell rings again.

Paul stretches his hand toward the doorknob. Jeanne bites it.

PAUL Aie . . .

JEANNE Did we make a pact-yes or no? Nobody must see us together. You could kill me and no one would know, not even this bible freak.

Paul puts his hands around her neck and playfully begins to squeeze her throat.

JEANNE (in a low voice, playfully) Help!

VOICE (offscreen) The true Bible . . . don't close your door to eternity.

Paul turns her around and, pressed against her back, he clasps one hand over her mouth. With the other, he continues to clasp her throat. He whispers in her ear.

PAUL Not him . . . or the concierge . . . who's half-blind anyway.

JEANNE You don't even have a motive . . . The perfect crime . . . In fact . . . It's stupid. Let me go . . . I don't feel like it anymore.

Paul lets her go. She walks away while he continues to listen, with his ear against the door. We hear Jeanne open the bathroom door.



VOICE (offscreen) Someone is in there! Open the door to the Jehovah's Witness.

The Bible man knocks insistently at the door. Paul waits for Jeanne to go into the bathroom.

Paul opens the front door abruptly. Bent in half, his eyes at the keyhole, the "Bible salesman" jumps back, caught in the act of peeping. He is tall, very thin, hairless, a kind of worm. Now he faces a completely nude Paul, who barks at him.

PAUL Stop bugging us! Biblical pig! Get lost! Go!

The salesman runs down the stairs.

SCENE 14

INTERIOR: HOTEL; NIGHT

Still another door that opens abruptly. Paul appears. This is a hotel room like the others but . . . very different. There are flowers everywhere. Too many flowers. Even the sink is filled with them, a great bunch of white carnations waiting for a vase. Raymond, the concierge of the hotel, appears behind Paul.

RAYMOND It looks good, doesn't it, boss?

In the room the two beds have been put together. The empty bed is surrounded by flowers, wreaths and garlands. It is obviously waiting for the corpse of Rosa. In some other room someone is tuning an instrument. We hear soft pieces of music, loud pieces of music, and then long silences. It must be a tenor saxophone.

PAUL Only Rosa is missing.

RAYMOND Your mother-in-law needed something to do.

Raymond moves a wreath as he mumbles to himself.

RAYMOND This is a nice, quiet room. Inside window, no noise. Except for that closet . . . Madame Rosa wanted to sell it. That closet is a nest of worms.

He has pushed the bed against the wall, leaving the other in the middle of the room. He goes quietly to the closet and puts his ear against it, looking at Paul for agreement.

RAYMOND You can hear them in the wood . . . sss . . . sss . . . I always put South Americans in this room.

PAUL South Americans?

RAYMOND Of course. South Americans never leave tips. "No tango dinero," they always say. "Manana, Manana."

Paul leaves the room with Raymond, who closes the door.

RAYMOND It's better to lock it. You never know, if a client comes in the middle of the night . . .

PAUL (joking unpleasantly) We're full up, Mister. Only the funeral parlor's free.

They walk down the hall.

RAYMOND It does you good to laugh a little. That's what Madame Rosa always said.

SCENE 15

INTERIOR: HALL; NIGHT

They arrive in the hall. A woman is leaning on the desk, bent over the register. She jumps back when she sees them. Very made-up, of uncertain age, red-blond hair. Raymond closes the register ostentatiously. Paul goes into the neighboring room. We can hear the woman speak.

MISS BLANDISH (offscreen) No interesting new faces today?

Paul makes coffee. His movements are precise. Evidently he is used to making it.

MISS BLANDISH Paul! Want to bet the races with me?

Miss Blandish is in the entrance of the room.

PAUL The races? Why not? Want some coffee?

MISS BLANDISH Not now. Poor Rosa and I knew a jockey who used to give us tips.

PAUL Rosa never told me. Did you win?

MISS BLANDISH Never. But it was a distraction, and then Rosa loved horses so much. We were planning to buy one together.

PAUL She didn't know anything about them.

Miss Blandish stops talking and looks curiously at a man coming down the stairs. His bare legs are visible under his coat, which he wears as a robe on his nude body. He addresses Raymond.

MARLOWE (American accent) Didn't anybody call for me?

RAYMOND No one.

The man's eye look toward the door. Miss Blandish butts into the conversation.

MISS BLANDISH Hello, Mister Marlowe . . . How are you?

The man doesn't seem to recognize her. Then after an instant, he replies in a low voice.

MARLOWE Terrible, Miss Blandish. Terrible.

He goes back up the stairs. As soon as he disappears, she imitates his voice and his sunken cheeks.

MISS BLANDISH Terrible, Miss Blandish. Terrible.

She turns back to Paul, resuming their conversation.

Paul is pouring himself a cup of coffee, and looks at her strangely, but Miss Blandish's attention wanders again. A young man with short hair enters the hotel and approaches Raymond. The collar of his coat is up. He speaks softly that Miss Blandish can't hear what he's said. So she turns back to Paul.

MISS BLANDISH Yes, yes . . . Rosa ran away when she was thirteen, to join an ~~Indian~~ circus. Funny she never told you about it.

Raymond appears in the doorway.

RAYMOND There's a guy out front . . . only speaks English. All I got is that he doesn't have any papers.

Last CUTTING ROOM Paris

IN A SCENE CUT FROM THE
FILM, PAUL (MARLON
BRANDO). PLAYFULLY
PRETENDS TO KILL JEANNE
(MARIA SCHNEIDER)

PAUL Go to sleep, Raymond. I'll take care of it.

RAYMOND Thanks, boss.

Miss Blandish observes the scene. Raymond takes his raincoat off a hook, and his briefcase. The young man is sitting and waiting. Paul finishes his coffee, and Raymond comes to say good-bye before leaving.

RAYMOND No passport. No baggage. No money either, if you ask me. Good night, boss.

PAUL Good night, Raymond.

MISS BLANDISH Good night, Raymond.

Raymond exits. Paul approaches the young man, but before speaking to him glances pointedly at Miss Blandish. She understands, and goes toward the stairs, murmuring.

MISS BLANDISH Why did she do that . . . Sunday was the Grand Prix at Auteuil. What an idea to die.

She disappears up the stairs. Paul scrutinizes the young man, who holds his coat by the collar. He carries only a small package under one arm.

PAUL Where are you coming from?

YOUNG MAN Dusseldorf . . . Winter's very long there.

PAUL So I've heard. You're the third one this winter.

YOUNG MAN About the passport . . . I'll have one in a couple of days.

Paul takes a key off the board.

PAUL Top floor.

YOUNG MAN About the money . . . I don't know when I'll be able to pay you.

Paul goes toward the kitchen. Before entering it, he turns around.

PAUL Last door



The young man starts up the stairs. The last floor. The young man walks down the hall. A door opens. Marlowe in his raincoat watches him pass. It is not the only person he is waiting for. He lets him go by, then sits on the first step of the staircase and waits. The last door. The young man enters, and locks the door behind him. He rips his package open. It contains a pair of bluejeans, a shirt, and a pullover sweater. At the same time, he takes his coat off. He is wearing the uniform of a U.S. soldier. He undresses with abrupt gestures and rolls his uniform into a ball, looking for a place to hide it. Far away, we hear the saxophone. It has finally found its melody, and repeats it obsessively. Marlowe crouches on the stairs.

Downstairs, Paul also listens to the distant music that comes from the bowels of his hotel. Sitting in the little room, he surveys the objects that surround him. It is his last tie with Ross. He closes his eyes.

SCENE 29
INTERIOR: HOTEL; NIGHT

The woman is sitting on a divan in the shadows. She is smoking a cigarette when she sees Paul reappear, alone. He sits on the divan facing her.

PROSTITUTE I knew it. First you let him get away, then you can't get him back.

PAUL Want something to drink?

PROSTITUTE Where am I to find another one? At this hour.

Paul searches his jacket for some money.

PAUL How much did I cost you? A hundred francs okay?

The woman laughs loudly in the shadows.

PROSTITUTE A hundred . . . two hundred . . . give me what you can. I don't do it for the money. I like it, you understand? You know you're cute? Come sit here.

Paul doesn't move. She hums the beginning of a song.

PROSTITUTE They say I have a beautiful voice. If you want, we can do it here. I'm wearing a practical dress. The zipper opens all the way. I don't even need take it off. Come on, don't be shy . . .

Paul turns on the light. She didn't expect it, and is shocked. She and Paul look at each other. It is a death mask there, not a face, and this isn't a body, but a skeleton. So Paul thinks. And the woman senses it. She stands up all at once and closes her dress. Disgust envelopes her expression from eyes to the mouth.

PROSTITUTE Don't look at me like that. I'm not young anymore. So what? Your wife will be just like me one day.

Kenneth Anger is certainly one of the most influential and best known experimental filmmakers. His films are still being shown after interest in other underground filmmakers have waned. His influence can still be seen in rock videos and in mainstream blockbusters like *Blue Velvet*.

Anger has been nearly as successful in the writing field. The two volumes of *Hollywood Babylon* are likely to remain perennial best sellers, and have inspired a host of imitators. *Hollywood Babylon* is now a phrase used in common language. The first book provided the inspiration for many "Scandals of the Silver Screen" documentaries, including one by Andy Warhol.

Still much about Kenneth Anger is unknown to the public. Strange, considering the standing of some of the people with whom he has associated or collaborated. In the fifties Anger collaborated with Cocteau on a film version of his *Jeune Homme et la mort* and travelled to Sicily with Dr. Alfred Kinsey to film Aleister Crowley's murals. A selection of his films have been released on video via Mystic Fire Video, a company run by underground filmmaker Sheldon Rochlin.

When I arrived at Anger's New York apartment, he was dressed casually, in a bright red shirt and blue jeans. His front room had a ceiling covered with tiny silver stars, the walls full of vintage movie posters and stills. His dwelling was furnished with Hollywood artifacts: a director's chair with clipboard and a Mickey Mouse telephone where the director took his calls. His prize trophy was an electrically lighted violin from the Busby Berkeley musical *Gold Diggers of 1933*. The adjoining room, his study, was done entirely in red-red walls, furniture and venetian blinds. One wall was draped with the Moroccan flag, red cloth embroidered with green pentagrams. The room was silent except for the flickering of tiny light bulbs in patterned rows across the face of a five pointed star like a marquee. The electric candles on a wooden Valentino shrine was the only other source of light in the room.

In this interview, conducted on two separate occasions, in 1979 and 1981, we spoke of the sixties and seventies. Movies were not the topic of conversation.

JIM CONDON



KENNETH ANGER

INTERVIEW

You were mentioned in advertisements for a recent book on the Rolling Stones, one devoted a section on your influence on the group. Do you still see the Stones?

Anymore you mean? I used to a lot, but aside from Anita Pallenberg, the old girlfriend of Keith Richards, I don't have much contact with them because Mick Jagger travels in the jet set and I despise all that. He invited me to his marriage ten years ago and I hated Bianca immediately because of her vibrations and I said, "No thank you very much, I'll wait and come to the divorce." Which took about ten years to work out, but I knew they were totally incompatible from the beginning. But he's a masochist with women, so that's why he married her.

I read that Anita put a curse on the marriage.

Well so did I!

Have you seen Anita lately?

Not since she had all that hassle with the boy committing suicide and all that, no. I don't even know where she is. She was staying somewhere in New Jersey, then she was staying in upstate New York. They left in such a hurry that they did a terrible thing. They left the pets behind. They left a dog and a cat that were starving because they just got in the car and left. Which is absolutely unforgivable, that sort of thing. You don't forgive anybody that mistreats animals. Even if they're crazy, which she is, slightly.

Did you read *Up and Down with The Rolling Stones*?

You mean the one by that Spanish chap Tony Sanchez? Well I was going to sue him and I just haven't got around to it because it's really slanderous.

I thought it was very moralistic, but it had a good deal of information-

But it isn't information, it's misinformation in the first place! Spanish Tony, for him to be moralistic, he happens to have been, during the sixties, the leading drug runner and drug connection for heroin, cocaine and hashish in London. For him to act like he's moralistic, the kid should have been thrown in prison. He's a little crook who couldn't work his scam with drugs anymore so he decided to sell his memoirs, first to *News of the World*, the Sunday Newspaper. So they said, "Why don't you turn it into a book?" They got a ghost writer for him- he's totally illiterate anyway. The whole thing was put together by a ghost writer. I should sue him but it's such a hassle to sue people when you don't have a lot of money.

I think he's prepared for that possibility.

You mean that people will sue him? The Stones haven't, have they?

No, but I hope they do.

Yes, but you see you could easily blackmail the Stones, he knows a lot about the Stones that isn't in the book. He knows where the bodies are buried, speaking figuratively.

Was there anything that he said about you that you consider-

Well, everything. In the first place I haven't read the book. I saw excerpts from it that were published in *News of the World*, and I was thinking of suing *News of the World*. It's such a pile of garbage, it's the worst paper published in England, but they're an extremely rich and powerful organization. It's worse than the *National Enquirer*. It's been around for fifty years and everything in it- if it isn't slander, it's some kind of innuendo- huge headlines about Princess Margaret sleeping with her chauffeur, something like that. That's the pitch of the whole thing. It's the largest selling newspaper in England. It's the equivalent of what *Confidential Magazine* used to be here in the fifties. No one really takes it seriously. Now they call me a devil worshipper. Well now this is technically incorrect and it's

also libelous. It could also be injurious to my career, in a sense that I may want to give a lecture, which I do with my films, at a Catholic school and they'd say, "We can't let a devil worshipper in our college," and so it's injuring my career. It is also untrue. I am not a devil worshipper. They stated it as a fact. They didn't say "alleged to be" or "rumored to be" they just said he's a devil worshipper. Which is pretty absurd.

Are you still a Thelemite? (Follower of Aleister Crowley)

I have a large collection of Aleister Crowley material. Crowley was an excellent artist. I have one of the world's largest collections of his paintings. Nearly all of them were burned by the Nazis. He sent them to be exhibited in Berlin in the early thirties, the brown shirts went in and said, "This is a degenerate English Artist," which could hardly be denied, what with Crowley's reputation for this and that, plus the fact that he was English, they took all the paintings out in the street and burned



Bob Beaulieu. Anger put a curse on him and he landed in Dual Prison. They're still friends.

them. I'm a member of no organizations because they're all phony. Every single one of them. They're not legitimate. Anyone can call themselves O.T.O. Crowley didn't pass along a charter to any one of them. Not one of them is legitimate. The only one he thought was a man who is now dead named John Whiteside Parsons, who was a scientist in a Jet Propulsion Lab in California, was going to be his Magickal son and carry on, but he did something Crowley disliked and Crowley disowned him. When he died in 1947- nothing. It was all left up in the air.

How were you first introduced to the work of Aleister Crowley?

It does happen that people are a bit precocious, but on the other hand, until you're thirty, everything that goes through your mind can possibly be just a phase of growing up. It's very rare to have spiritual insights before you're thirty. Though it can rarely happen. I started when I was seventeen or eighteen. I was fortunate enough to know in California, John Parsons, who wrote the *Book of Babalon*. He was blown up in an



Still from *Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, film by Kenneth Anger. Paul Mathiesen, Kenneth Anger, Renate Druks

accident, murdered by Howard Hughes, that's what I think. He worked for Jet Propulsion laboratories which was connected with Cal Tech in Pasadena. He invented the Rocket fuel for the Saturn Rocket. Then he was blown up at home, in an accident in his basement where he had his own lab.

Are you familiar with Kenneth Grant? (Head of One British OTO)

Well he's the biggest fraud of all. His writings may be interesting, but they're full of hot air. I have a photostat of a letter expelling him by Germer. Kenneth Grant is just a sick sort of journalist, he's in cahoots with Crowley's enemy, who is John Symonds (Crowley's literary executor).

He had to worm his way to get access to certain documents.

I know, but magicians don't have to worm their way into anything. If he was a real magician, he would have blasted Symonds and Symonds would have dropped dead. At any rate, after the curse that was put on old Grant... who looks exactly like Bela Lugosi-

Have you ever seen him?

Oh yes I know he and his wife Steffi. The reason I decided not to see them anymore in England is that they invited me over for a drink and they gave me canape sandwiches that had excrement mixed with olives and liver paste. I immediately knew something was wrong with these little sandwiches they were serving and refused to eat them. They were trying to get me hooked as a kind of slave psychically, in a stupid voodoo way, nothing Crowley would touch with a thousand yard stick, putting shit in the food you gave somebody.

Is Jimmy Page doing the soundtrack for *Lucifer*?

No, we had a quarrel and I fired him because he started to take heroin and I disapproved very strongly of it. It was interfering with what he was doing magically, so I dismissed him. And then I put a curse on the whole group and the child died and the car crashed and a bunch of bad luck happened for two years. They were sort of half-baked hippie

stew. They haven't kept it going like the Stones. I attended one of their concerts once. They put me in the V.I.P. section, which is right up front next to the speakers. They thought they were doing me a favor. My ears rang for an hour afterwards.

What was Page doing magically?

Nothing, that was the problem.

I noticed that you put a curse on Bob Beausoleil and he ended up in jail within a year and a half-

Yes that's right. But we're friends again. I've been out to visit him in prison and we correspond. He's in Tracy, California. It's called the Duell Prison. Duell was an early senator in California. I personally wouldn't care to have a prison named after me.

Anger showed me the record of the *Lucifer Rising* soundtrack that Beausoleil had recorded in Prison. I saw a familiar name. Is that Steve Grogan on guitar who was in the Family?

(CHUCKLES) They're my band of killers.

Anger met Beausoleil during the Haight Ashbury's heyday where he associated with a number of people who would appear in his later films. Beat poets like Lenore Kandel, Harvey Blay and Michael McClure. He found his first apartment through the novelist Stephen Schenck (*The Night Clerk*).

I had an apartment in San Francisco where the previous tenant, an artist, had painted in the shadows on the walls to create an optical illusion effect. I dropped acid there once. It was a very strange experience.

Through Michael McClure you met Frewheelin' Frank, treasurer of the Hell's Angels. Did you ever bring Frank to the church of Satan?

I brought Frank to some of the open meetings, but I don't know where he is now. The Hell's Angels have become just like the Mafia. If you do something they don't like, they kill you...

Did you design your letterhead?

It's a specific statue of Ramses in Luxor. Yes, of course I designed it. But the airbrush work was done by Page Wood, who is a good friend of mine. He's a cover artist for the *National Lampoon* and other magazines. But he has the airbrush and he followed my rough sketch.

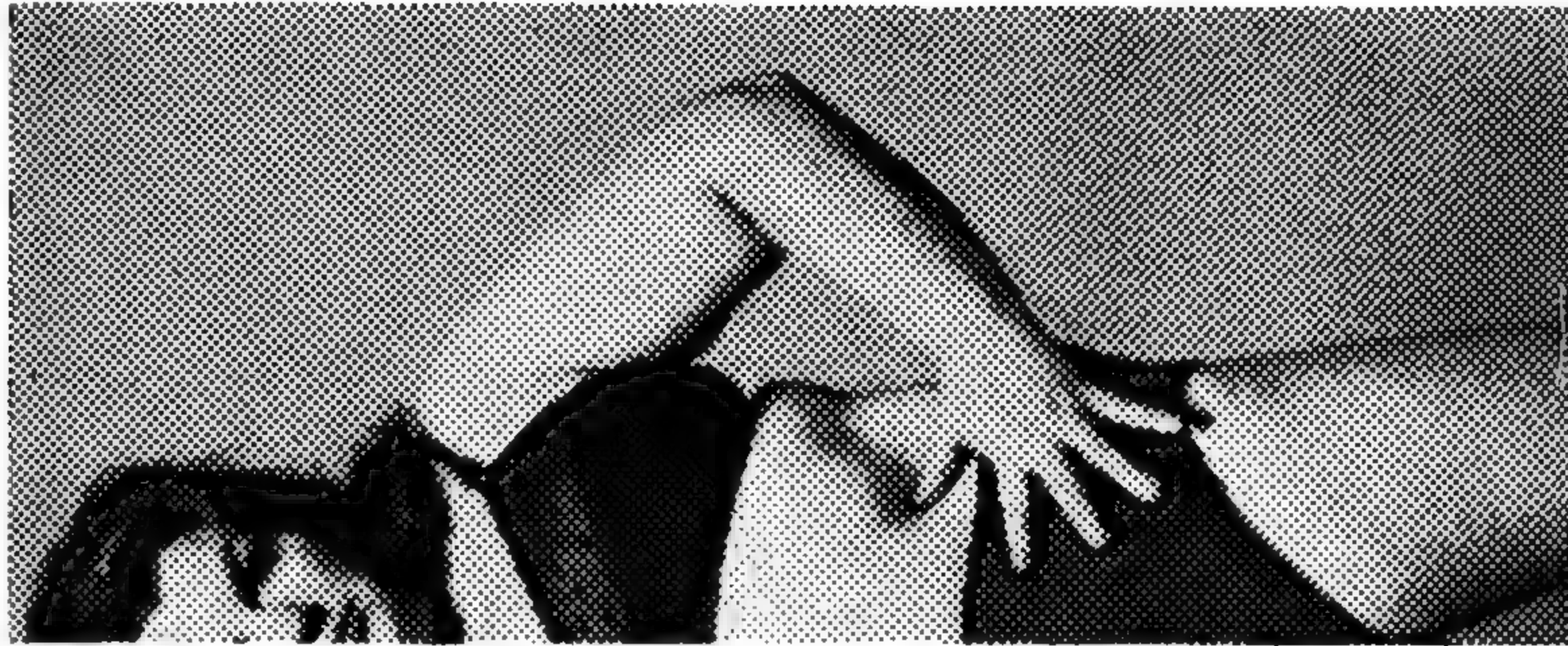
You are of Cuban descent?

Half Cuban, half German. When I say half, I mean there's much more German than there is Cuban. Cuban Grandmother and the rest is German.

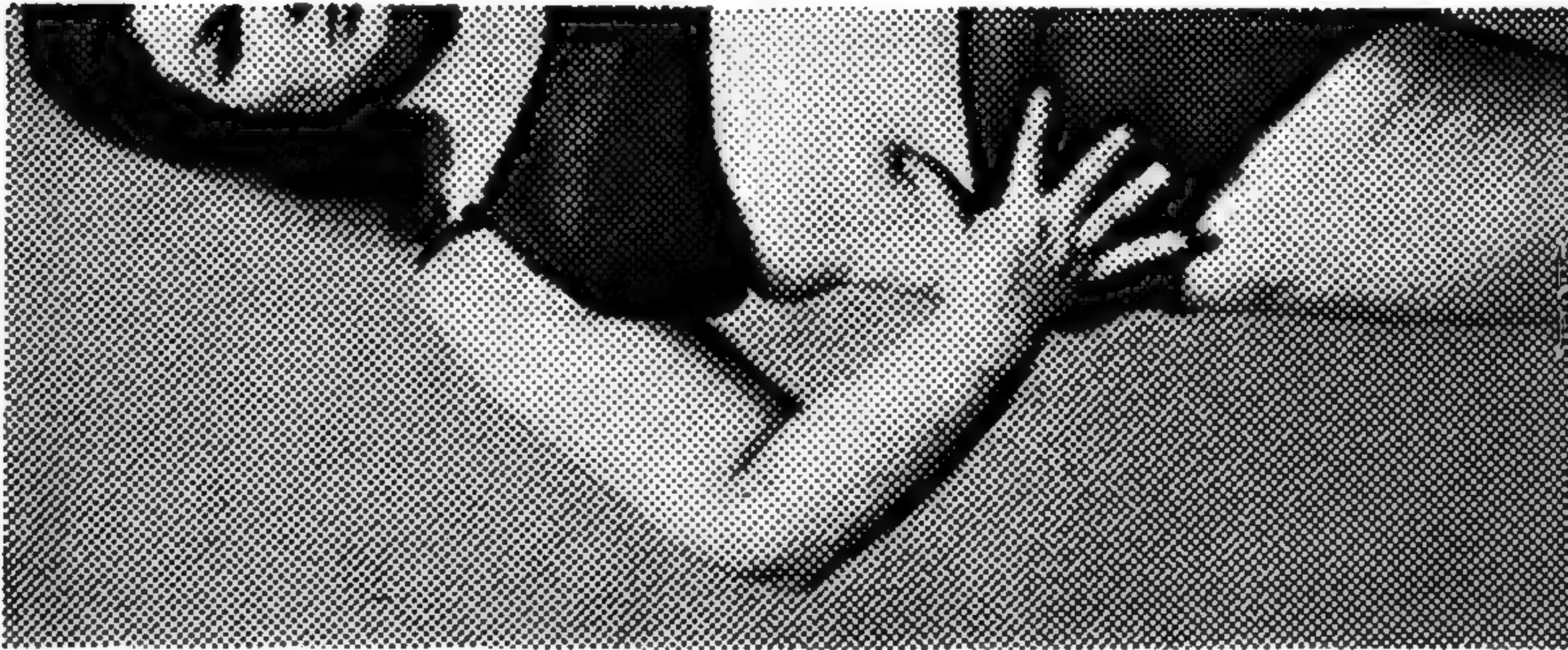
I've noticed that you have at least 2 different birthdays.

Well, that's only 2. Most people who work in films have about four. I think Merle Oberon, when she died, had at least four different birthdays. In other words it's deliberate, it's not an accident. One of the biggest things I share with Aleister Crowley is a certain very special sense of humour. My whole life has been based on that. The practical joke is not unknown in my modus operandi. That's precise enough. It's possible that I don't want my precise birthday out for astrological reasons. I'm February 3rd. I was born at midnight, that makes me a Scorpio, according to California where I was born. My ascendant is Scorpio and my sun sign is Aquarius. That much anybody can find out. But there are more precise things that I prefer to keep secret. There's about three people in the world who would know what to do with them.

●



They
were lovers
who loved
honeymoons.





Other people's.

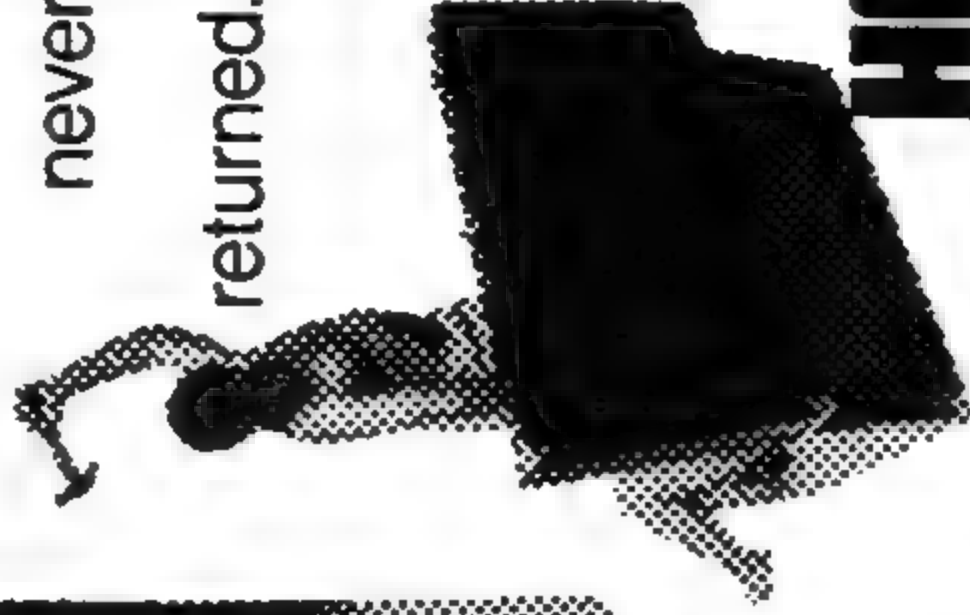
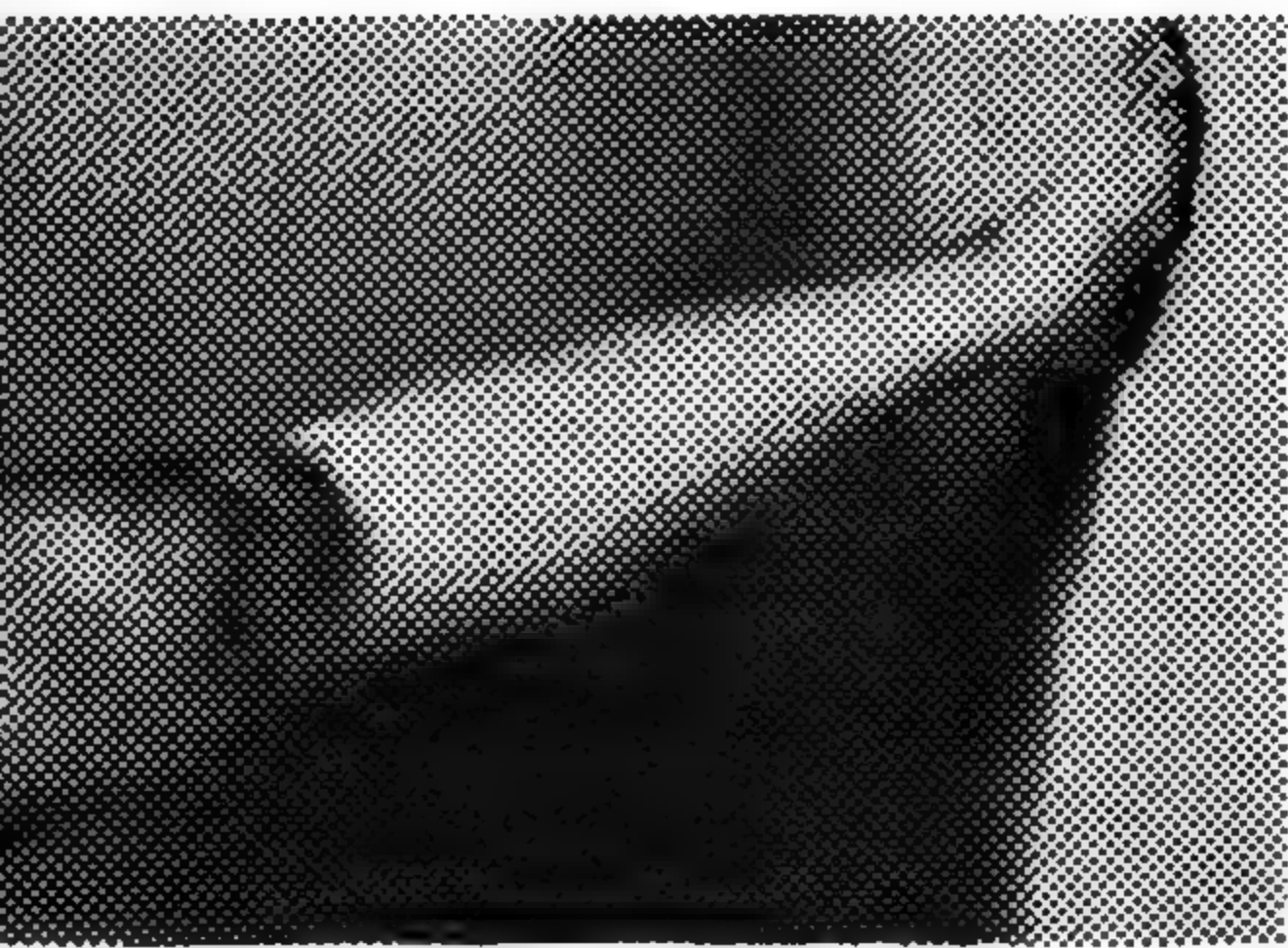
From

which the

other people

never

returned.



THE HONEYMOON KILLERS

R RESTRICTED - PERSONS UNDER 16 NOT ADMITTED.
UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN.

A WARREN STEIBEL PRODUCTION Starring

SHIRLEY STOLER • TONY LO BIANCO • MARY JANE HIGBY • Written and Directed by LEONARD KASTLE •



FROM CINERAMA RELEASING CORPORATION

HAIRSPRAY

BECAUSE THEY'RE WHITE.



*Dr. Fredrickson
(John Waters)
tries electrical
behavior
modification
on Penny
(Leslie Ann Powers).*

John Waters tells all
(or most)

John Waters has done the most offensive thing in his entire career. He has made a mainstream movie. HAIRSPRAY is a trendy, safe, moneymaker. However, there still remain touches of Waters. A kid pukes at an amusement park. Debbie Harry actually pops a zit, in close-up. Waters is still there.

Here he talks acting, directing, call waiting, electrocution, and the Prince of Puke himself actually becomes offended by the interviewer . . .

Gore Hi John, this is Chris Gore from Film Threat.

Waters Hi Chris, how are you?

Gore How're you doin'?

Waters Good.

Gore What's goin' on?

Waters Oh, God I'm on this comedy tour and pushin' Hairspray.

Gore All right.

Waters Wait, lemme get a cigarette. Oh my God I might be out, oh I'm okay, go on.

Gore Were you able to work a lot of your old actors into this film?

Waters Yeah, Mink Stole's in it, Mary Vivian Pierce, of course Divine has a big role in it, all the ones that are alive are in it.

Gore Can they finally act?

Waters Uh, (THINKS ABOUT IT) they always could act. Maybe I can finally direct.

Gore Does this hinder the movie, the fact that they can act?

Waters No, because this movie is a little different, this movie, to make it work, you have to believe it. We have a lot of new people in this one, besides the star names we have Sonny Bono, Debbie Harry, Rick Ocasek, Pia Zadora, but we also have a lot of new people that you don't know yet and I think they are very good at it.

Gore Did they get more than a glass of water on the set?

Waters Sure, this is Screen Actor Guild, it was made like that so that's why it cost a lot more money.

Gore Did you know that your films are still banned in Canada and Europe?

Waters Well they're not banned completely, I know in England because of the nasties that thing with the video, all that, but they still play a lot of places. I was just in Canada with a whole bunch of them.

Gore Were there any major fuck-ups in shooting Hairspray?

Waters No, it was real hot, it was about 100 degrees everyday, I'm used to it being 10 below. Since it's a dance movie you can't have the airconditioning on you have to turn the movie lights up real hot to dance, people were passing out and hyperventilating, we had a nurse, there were ambulances there so that was a little heavy.

Gore Is there gonna be a music video to promote this like with Flashdance?

Waters It's nothing like Flashdance, it's a musical comedy about integration.

LAUGH

Waters There's an album on MCA.

Gore What will be the major fads or trends that this movie will start?

Waters I'm not going to be presumptuous about it and say it will start any, if I can hope that it will start any, it will be of course, the teased hair look, we used 60 cases of hairspray, there's about 1200 hairdos in the movie. Debbie Harry used such a heavy wig that she had scabs on her head from wearin' 'em. So, hopefully, maybe teased hair. Because it's the only way parents'll let you rebel is your hair. I mean mohawks don't get a rise anymore, people think they're cute.

Gore Would you vote Sonny Bono for president?

Waters I could imagine the throbbing in my blood as I pulled the politically correct Bono lever. I told Sonny I wanted t-shirts, it would be the only bumper sticker, I hate bumper stickers, but I will put a Sonny Bono For Mayor bumper sticker on my car. I hope he wins for real because Sonny's great.

Gore Is Cher as much of a bitch as she seems?

Waters I don't know Cher at all I have nothing to do with Cher. Sonny's singing with Chastity now, his daughter.

Gore I'm just trying to get you to say something mean about Cher because I personally can't stand her.

Waters I love Cher. You know I never say things mean about people.

JOHN BELLOWS IN LAUGHTER

Gore Yeah, right. She just seems like the ultimate Bimbo, the way she dresses.

Waters I didn't say anything, I have no reaction.



The Von Tussle family played by Colleen Fitzpatrick, Debbie Harry, and Sonny Bono.

Gore I'm just trying to provoke you. How closely does *Hairspray* follow the real story of the Buddy-Deaners?

Waters Certainly that was the seed of the idea, it's a much exaggerated version of it.

BUH-DEEEEP

THE RING THROUGH NOTIFIES ME THAT I HAVE ANOTHER CALL COMING IN. I ANSWER IT AND RETURN QUICKLY.

Waters I mean, Buddy Dean's in the movie. Every city had those dance shows they have them in cities now so it's not the Buddy Dean.

Gore How was it working with Pia Zadora?

Waters Oh Pia's great, she bought Pick-Fair yesterday did you hear that?

Gore What?

Waters Pick-Fair, yknow the famous house in Hollywood of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks.

BUH-DEEEEP

ANOTHER RING THROUGH!

Gore FUCK! Hang on I'll get rid of 'em! (I RETURN) Hello, sorry about that.

Waters You oughta find out who the person is who thought up call waiting.

Gore Three way calling is pretty cool you should try that.

Waters It's too complicated, I'd hang up on everybody.

Gore Any more writing on the horizon?

Waters Two books. One they're putting out on trade paperback with three scripts to my films, one for *Pink Flamingos*, and the sequel to *Pink Flamingos* which we never made called *Flamingos Forever and Desperate Living*. Then I'm doing another book but that won't be for a year or so.

Gore Who's your favorite Rock n' Roll guitar player, is it Link Ray?

Waters Oh I love Link Ray, but I don't know much about guitar players, they always have these shag haircuts. I'll tell you who was my favorite, Duchess when she sang *So Diddle*, there was a woman that used to play the guitar with her.

Gore If you could make any tragedy or real-life disaster into a movie what would it be?

Waters Well I've only really been obsessed by Cheryl Kramer yknow she was Wyla Turner's daughter but unfortunately Alan Carr has already bought the rights, she's one of my idols.

Gore You wouldn't want to do the TV movie on the Space Shuttle?

Waters No.

Gore Is there any other film that lives up to the high standards of *Desperate Living*?

Waters Not that your gonna like this but I'll tell you my three favorite movies of the year. *Love Is a Dog From Hell*, *Near Dark*, and *I Liked Street Trash* too.

Gore What's the most obnoxious thing you can do in a movie theater?

John Waters,
Pia Zadora
(as Beatnik Chick)
and Ric Ocasek
(as Beatnik Cat).



Waters Talk. I almost get beat up. If I even hear a person say one word I turn around and try to start a fight with them. Most of the times the girls' dates wanna beat me up. Because they get really appalled. "YOU'RE NOT IN FRONT OF YOUR VCR Y'KNOW!" They stop in shock and look at me. People think they're in your living room.

Gore Polyester used the gimmick of odorama, if you could have a dream gimmick for Hairspray what would it be?

Waters Wire the theaters so everybody got electrocuted in their seats.

LAUGH

Gore That would pack 'em in!

Waters Yeah, once.

Gore You get interviewed quite a lot, what do you hate about interviews or interviewers?

Waters I don't hate any of it, it's just, sometimes the question; where did you meet Divine?, which is a very normal question that I would ask if I was an interviewer but I've answered it for 15 years so I sort of go into it like in computerland. I wanna make up lies and say I met her at a car accident or make up something different than the truth.

Gore Well, I've run out of basic questions-

Waters I really like the magazine.

Gore Yeah, I was gonna ask you if there's any chance you could write for it in the future?

Waters No. You don't pay enough.

LAUGH

Gore Hmmm. I'm making this action-adventure-comedy involving A.I.D.S. this summer and I was wondering-

Waters Oh, that sounds horrible.

Gore No, it's gonna be great-

Waters Oh, no, A.I.D.S. isn't funny I wouldn't see it and I won't say good things about it.

Gore Really?

Waters No. I'm against that.

Gore I was gonna ask you if you wanted a part in it-

Waters Don't put A.I.D.S. jokes in-

Gore There are no jokes about A.I.D.S. but it is a comedy.

Waters No comment.

END OF INTERVIEW

MOVIE LAND

A TRAVELOGUE

USA

by Jack Stevenson

Between 1978 and 1984 I travelled aimlessly all over the country, living a few weeks to half a year in one place, sometimes with friends, other times knowing no one, often hitch-hiking... going to the movies every chance I got. I often remember places by the movies I saw. The theaters too I remember.

My first indelible image of Hollywood was... I had hitched down from San Francisco that day and was dropped off at the Hollywood Boulevard ramp coming in from the San Fernando Valley. I walked up and found myself on Hollywood Boulevard: to the west lay downtown Hollywood with its theater marquees and the conically trimmed trees lining the walk— to the east, shimmering in the polluted haze, was Charles Bukowski's favorite intersection: Hollywood and Western. I went to a phone booth and dialed a number. No answer. I went into a nearby XXX theater, two blocks east of the World theater, to get out of the sun for a while and take a shave in the men's room.

I sat in my seat with my duffle bag and was subjected to a 15 minute scene of a lady slowly pushing a grinning Santa Claus-headed dildo in and out of her cunt as the camera focused a close-up.

I went to the bathroom and shaved. I went out and tried the phone again. Coincidentally I ended up living in the ten-dollar-a-night Hastings Hotel just four blocks west on the Boulevard, across from the Pantages theater and close to Hollywood and Vine. Tyrone Power's star was right outside the front door. The World theater became a favorite hangout. I have fond memories of seeing *Kill Squad*, *I Disremember Mama* and other obscurities there. The LA Times used to assign cub reporter Linda Bell to review these types of movies, often at the



World theater. She hated these movies, not passionately, but with a low grade disgust. In one review she complained that at some chainsaw flick a fight broke out in the audience and was moved into the lobby where everyone clustered around to watch while teenage hoodlums ran amok in the theater. She felt very "intimidated". Little mention was made of the movie itself.

Milwaukee four years later. Wonderful town. I took a bus over from Minneapolis (which sucks), and headed back east with about a \$1,000. I checked into the Randolph Hotel June 19th. By a brilliant stroke of luck it was officially condemned two days later, ensuring all residents (me) 2 months free rent and a \$300 relocation allowance. Right down the street on Wisconsin Avenue was the old Wisconsin theater with six new flicks every week, a rotation of 3 kung-fu features and three usually pretty obscure drive-in type exploitation films. I could see the marquee from my window on the eighth floor of the Randolph and every Tuesday morning I'd stick my head out the window to delight at

what new movies were playing. *Cauldron Of Death*, *Isa: Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks*, *Astro Zombies*, *Black Sbx*, *Bloody Pit of Horror*, *Dr. Tar's Dungeon of Torture* and *Doll Squad* were only a few of the many masterpieces I saw at the Wisconsin theater. It was an old roomy theater, filled with the shabby remnants of fake grandeur that included cheap plaster-cast Greek statues. Here was a theater you could live in. I don't mean physically, I mean spiritually.

I stayed the whole summer at the Randolph, going to the movies and generally fucking off. I didn't know a soul in Milwaukee. I had an aunt and uncle that lived in a small town just west. I never called.

I was in New York City three years prior to that, staying at the Kenmore and Breslin hotels. I stumbled into the famous Variety Photo Plays theater on 3rd Avenue near 14th street long before Bill Landis wrote about it in *Rolling Stone* and *Village Voice*. Prostitutes crowded the isles, trolling for suckers, while queers in starched white shirts seat-hopped to the tune of the old floor fans clanging away up front.

I lived in Baltimore at the Franklin Hotel for a month in the fall of 1982. It was there I met John Waters. In his first book *Shock Value* he describes a downtown theater where he went to watch *Nigger Love*, and during the movie chaos erupted when a pack of rats swarmed over the sticky coke-syrup floor. No one left, they just laughed and put their feet up, he relates. The threat of a libel suit prevented him from mentioning the name of the theater, but it was the Towne theater. The nearby Hippodrome in my opinion was even worse. In the early 1950's Hank Williams had played a legendary week of shows at the Hippodrome and it looks like they haven't cleaned the place since. I saw an *Idi Amin* movie there.

I also spent a lot of time at the Chinese language theaters down in Chinatown that I could never find again in a million years. People kept changing into animals and back again, the colors were beautiful. I saw *Caligula* at a theater on 42nd street - the screaming jitterbugs were temporarily silenced (and disgusted) when the girl comes at the end.

In Boston - perhaps in all of New England - the sleaziest theater is the Pilgrim.



A once majestic opera house gone straight to hell and beyond. On a hot summer day it slowly steams in a damp stew of mold, lye and ancient human sweat. The place is so fucking dark you can't see your hand in front of your face. When they close up about 3 a.m. they just shut off the movie and start banging on the backs of the chairs to clear the place. Periodic health-code raids never even get as far as the actual theater: they find all the violations they need in the stairways and bathrooms. Satan himself wouldn't sink low enough to blow five bucks at the Pilgrim. It's a pity to think that someday video may put an end to all of this. Already long gone is the historic South Station Cinema, the renegade porn theater that showed *Pink Flamingos* in Boston long before the art houses over in Cambridge got ahold of it.

I was recently in Toronto and ended up at the estimable R10 theater on busy Young street, Toronto's strip. For a grindhouse, the R10 shows a remarkably freewheeling mix of four films daily; one old first run movie, an adventure/exploitation number such as *Slaves of the Cannibal God*, an obscure cop or war movie and finally a porn flick, which in Canada means a cut flick - no penetration allowed. It all boils

Life too normal...see



down to virtually non-stop cunnilingus which Canadian censors apparently deem safe to shape the minds and souls of young Canadians - the wave of the future. Sometimes the censors let a blow job slip by and it's duly noted in the paper. I can't let this opportunity slip by to slam Canada's fucked up ridiculous censorship of movies, including many first run movies and art films. This country is clearly in the grips of a bunch of puritanical, microcephalic, jerk-offs. The seizure and censorship of films is commonplace. Getting back to the R/O - only 10 years ago it had four nearby brother theaters which have since closed, signalling hard times for movie-going whinos and hoods along Youngie.

Undoubtedly the sleaziest most disgusting theater I ever went to was in Billings, Montana. I don't recall the name of it, but since there's only one it doesn't much matter. It was twilight. As an idyllic sunset lit the western sky I noticed all these dotish couples walking in one direction through the quiet city streets like an army of zombies. Everyone from teenagers with their skinny blank-faced girlfriends on up to the old folks...cornflake box americana. A picture postcard of what's wrong with small towns and probably the whole country in general. I followed them, wondering where they were all going, all these idiots out on this Norman Rockwell summer American night. They were on their way to the one movie theater in town to see whatever Hollywood-factory-piece-of-shit some distributor was feeding them this week. This was the only theater I was ever afraid to walk into.

end.

The Subliminal Cinenema

The ears are torn, their foreheads stamped as the reluctant patrons file past the makeshift ticket booth, an upright abandon deepfreeze with suffocated youth inside. Choosing to pass up the snack bar, they are rudely ushered to randomly spiked seats and are handsomely manacled. The houselights dim, the audience quiets down, and the promising sounds of Jesse Crawford's organ with Jerry Lewis' vocals are first heard. The foil curtain is slashed and the featurette begins....

A pockmarked flesh hose spasmodically belches steaming vomit and urine, dowsing a rooftop perched pack of rabid mandrills, subsequently inciting a frenzied riot in which greased puppies are rapidly dismembered, slippery entrails and feces stuffed into garishly lipstick-stained mouths, the gutted fursacks to be flung down flaccid chimney of rank cheese, now throbbing with insatiable bloodlust. The diseased bloated bullfrogs of forgotten Parisian sewers gnaw contentedly on these undulating smokestacks, constantly excreting and devouring in a perverse moebius chain... The almost imperceptible faint fragrance of cyanide gas is perceived emanating from the obsolete dolby speakers... Meanwhile, on screen, a lobotomized Sade pounds his face bloody on the crystallized shards of a splintered Justine. Burying his shredded face in a dank public corner, totally oblivious to the envious cacophonous assault of the inquisitor's chorale or the steady blank stars of a Marat lost in divine reverie, drunk on sulphuric acid... Latex fingers are bitten down upon masochistically pulled to the extreme...

The flickering images continue with a soaking Jean Paul M. exposing his pitted breast, crowded with noisily suckling lamprey eels, his sallow flesh raw from corrosive chemical baths...

Sigmund Freud is discovered (in drag) and is violently expelled from the premises...

Marat passively bathes himself and in a brief moment of inspiration receives a saintly vision of Mme. Croday accepting an enthusiastic flagellation from the mechanized hands of the vernacular sodomite, John Wayne Gacy, who has been grossly transformed into a cackling costumed Mr. Punch, dangling on strings expertly manipulated by a sightless Bunuel. Luis then ever so carefully peels strips of bacon like tissue flayed from his puffy cheeks. These are then chewed and spat out by a carnivorous Dali into a rusted spittoon. The spittoon is then sealed with a film of mucoid phlegm and dog semen to prevent spoiling...

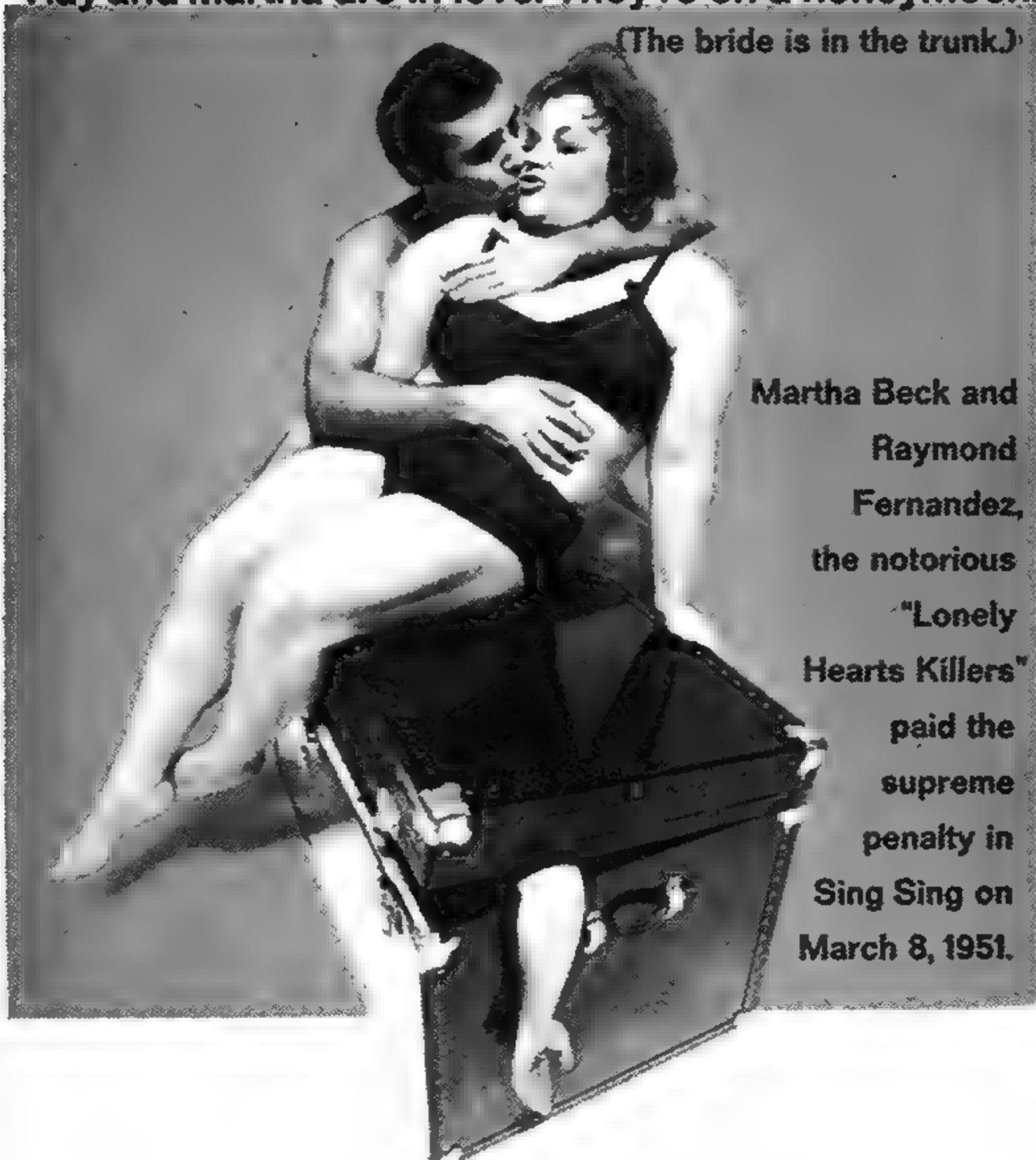
- Tim Caldwell

THE Honeymoon Killers

BY
RAYMOND YOUNG

***Ray and Martha are in love. They're on a honeymoon.**

(The bride is in the trunk.)



Martha Beck and
Raymond
Fernandez,
the notorious
"Lonely
Hearts Killers"
paid the
supreme
penalty in
Sing Sing on
March 8, 1951.

On February 26, 1949, Martha Beck and Raymond Fernandez were arrested for the murders of 28-year-old Delphine Downing and her three-year-old daughter, Rainelle. Beck was the one who phoned the police and, in later confessions, revealed a series dubbed the Lonely Hearts Murders. Twenty years later, first-time film producer Warren Steibel and opera composer Leonard Kastle retrieved these deeds for a movie that was to emulate and attract the boxoffice draw of two 1967 hits, *IN COLD BLOOD* and *BONNIE & CLYDE*. The result was a picture that Roger Greenspun, in the *New York Times*, called "one of the best and, curiously, most beautiful American movies." Francois Truffaut called it his favorite American film.

Fat Martha...
you'll never
forget her as
one of...

THE HONEY- MOON KILLERS



Now a footnote in the annals of crime, the Beck/Fernandez case derives its lurid appeal from confused passion and con-artistry. Their relationship began in April, 1947, when Fernandez replied to a personal ad placed by Beck. Prior to their meeting five months later, Fernandez had collected insurance money from Jane Wilson, who died in a suspicious train wreck in Spain. He used some of this money to visit Beck in September and, in no time, touched off romance. Not unlike Bonnie Parker and Carl Fugate (the young girl enacted by Sissy Spacek in *BADLANDS*), the insecure, bored Beck latched on as an accomplice to Fernandez's unscrupulous plot of bilking funds from lonely and gullible widows. And, on more than one occasion, their plans went askew.

The film opens on frustrated Martha Beck, head nurse at a Mobile, Alabama hospital, who lives with her senile mother in a modest urban home. Prompted by her friend Bunny, Martha joins a friendship club and begins correspondence with Ray Fernandez, a Spanish-born immigrant now living in New York City. Their letters soon become ardent, resulting in Ray's coming to Mobile. Martha, sexually attracted to Ray, falls in love with him. When he returns to New York, Martha connives to bind his affections by getting him to invite her there. After she arrives, Ray discloses his history of courting and swindling rich women, locating his victims through various lonely hearts channels.

Martha is so much in love with him that his back ground does not matter to her. She returns to Mobile, only to be fired from her hospital position. She tells everyone she married Ray while in New York and that

she is returning there. She puts her mother in a nursing home and goes back to Manhattan.

In an effort not to lose Ray, Martha insists on becoming an accomplice, posing as his sister and sharing his phony honeymoon trysts. Comprehending her jealousy, Ray promises Martha he will never love another woman and will avoid intimate relationships with his future victims.

After fleeing a New Jersey schoolteacher, Doris, who manages to escape with her life, Ray and Martha head for Arkansas, where Myrtle has agreed to marry Ray and pay him \$4000 for legitimizing her expected baby. After the wedding night, with Martha and Myrtle sharing the same bed and Ray using the living-room sofa, Martha, jealous of Myrtle feeds her pills which soon cause the pregnant woman to die. They leave in Myrtle's car and head back East.

They stop for a sojourn with would-be victim Evelyn Long. However, Martha has a fit of jealousy when she discovers Ray romancing the woman and their con game revealed.

They return to New York, where Ray buys a suburban home in Long Island. Their next victim is Janet Fay, a 60-year-old

Albany, New York, widow. Martha and Ray arrive in Albany shortly before New Year's Eve, and devote their time to flattering the gullible Janet. After spending the weekend together, Martha and Ray accompany Janet to her downtown banks where she keeps her savings of \$10,000. Ray has persuaded her to withdraw all her money to start a new business near their new home together. Martha and Ray drive Janet to Long Island, where they hide her endorsed checks in the basement. When Janet becomes suspicious, Ray induces Martha to bludgeon her with a hammer; Ray strangling the victim in her death throes. After this enactment of the actual January 4, 1949 murder, they bury Janet's body in a deserted cellar and dispose of her possessions.

A few days later, the pair turn up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and after suitable preliminary pleasantries, move in with a new prospect. Pretty young widow Delphine Downing, and her daughter Rainelle. Ray becomes infatuated with Delphine, and despite his promise to Martha, has sexual relations with his hostess. Martha learns all when Delphine tells her she is pregnant. Martha induces her to take some sleeping pills supposedly to abort the child. The sleeping pills put her into a daze, but she is still conscious when Ray returns home.



TONY LOBIANCO and SHIRLEY STOLER
star as Raymond Fernandez and Martha
Beck, the "lonely hearts murderers" who
committed a series of brutal homicides.

3¢U.S. Weather
Forecast
FALL COLOR
Details at Page 3**Daily Mirror**3¢ in N. Y. City
5¢ Elsewhere**3¢**

Vol. 27, No. 222

NEW YORK 17, N. Y., FRIDAY, MARCH 9, 1934

C.R. FINAL EDITION ★★ ★★

HEART KILLERS DIE CALMLY, MARTHA LAST

Stories on Page 3



The Lonely Hearts killers, Raymond Fernandez, and 200-pound Martha Beck, died in Sing Sing's electric chair last night.

The real Honeymoon Killers.

Fat Martha...
you'll never
forget her as
one of...

THE HONEY- MOON KILLERS



He takes a gun from the drawer and shoots her. Martha drowns the child in the basement, and Ray sets about to bury the two victims.

By now Martha realizes that Ray can never be faithful again. She calls the police and they arrive at the scene of the crime. While in prison awaiting the trial, Ray and Martha remain strongly in love, corresponding with each other once again.

GOLD TEETH & TOUPEE

While producer Warren Steibel may have been inspired by BONNIE & CLYDE's profits, Leonard Kastle, in researching his scenario, saw the potential of a B-film plot infiltrated by unique personas.

A day after their executions, the March 9, 1951, edition of the New York Daily Mirror described 200-pound Martha as "a huge, monstrous heap of flesh... she had a crew haircut, clipped close above the ears, thin at the temples. Her body was so tremendous that she scarcely could be wedged into the electric chair." Upon receiving the fatal jolts, "Martha sighed, four times. It was the physical reaction after each time the juice was thrown on. Her enormous body could not quiver, though it did fall back the infinitesimal distance the broad leather center band gave play. You could see it cut into the flesh as each time she fell forward again . . . It took six guards to lift what the law had left of her onto the white enameled cart which stood grimly behind the lethal machine of official destruction." When the body was wheeled out, "her overflowing chins were gray-green. Her arms, thicker than her

departed paramour's thigh, were crossed on her immense chest. It was a spectacle to an old reporter who thought he had seen everything . . . The 32 newspapermen and other invitees were beckoned to leave. No man hesitated."

Fernandez was almost an afterthought in news reports. "Fernandez, tall, broad-shouldered, olive-skinned, was bald without his toupee. His swarthy face was set in an unscrutable, flat mien, his wide mouth extended and drawn, his thin lips taut, but no apparent fear, surely no remorse, definitely no interest in the cross which he kissed mechanically as Father Donovan held it to his face before the first strap was swiftly, expertly adjusted."

Prior to their executions, Martha offered her body to science if Fernandez was set free. "Why won't my life pay for the debt they say we both owe?" she asked her attorney. She asserted that Fernandez had "stirred me to the depths," adding that "a love of that sort comes only to a few women." It was also disclosed that Martha, who had spent a longer time in the death house than any other woman, cost the state a then-record \$13,541 to maintain her during her 18 months and two weeks awaiting execution. Of this, \$13,264 represented the services of four matrons.

It's to Leonard Kastle's credit that he avoided moralizing in his screenplay, even though the newspapers of the time were full of it. Drama in news reporting is a lost theatrical art, exemplified by the Mirror: "These merciless, mercenary murderers, who had taken lives - no one will ever know entirely how many, ruthlessly and brutally, and whose last words to the world spoke of maudlin love for each other looked so utterly

You'll
never
forget
them.



unromantic that it seemed incredible that they had ever known affection . . . Here were adventurers who had set out against civilization with predatory plots that challenged such moral consequences."

Kastle approached his script in the same manner Truman Capote composed his non-fiction novels, an employment of facts and hearsay to reenact steps taken before being exposed. While Capote often withdrew to keep personal matters private, Kastle invents labyrinthine tests of will to allow his characters time to nurture and grow; soon their crimes are secondary to their personalities.

THE FAT GIRL & THE FAGGOT

Perfectly cast as Martha Beck, Shirley Stoler was not the original choice for the role. "Marilyn Chris, who I had worked with years ago at the Living Theatre, had tried for the role of Beck, but she wasn't the right type," Stoler reminisces. "She did something very few actresses in the world would do. She told them, 'If I'm not the right type, I know of someone who is!'"

Asked if she remembered the case before making the film, Shirley said, "I remembered the Beck case very well because I was an adult when it happened. The court case lasted for months. Martha was a very verbose witness. I was fascinated by her personality, and I guess I had done a kind of subconscious preparation for the role in my sleep. When I went in to read for the part, they said I was her. They told me if I didn't know how to act they would teach me. I read for it, got it and did the film."

A stage actress and former student of Judith Melina and Julian Wood, Stoler's early off-broadway credits include *Tonight We Improvise* and *No Corner in Heaven*, before she landed a part in the 1961 roadshow production of *The Music Man* with Forrest Tucker. During an extended trip to Europe, she found work in film dubbing and nightclub singing, as well as acting on the stage with Marjorie Dawn (of *BLACK ORPHEUS*) in *The Skin of Our*

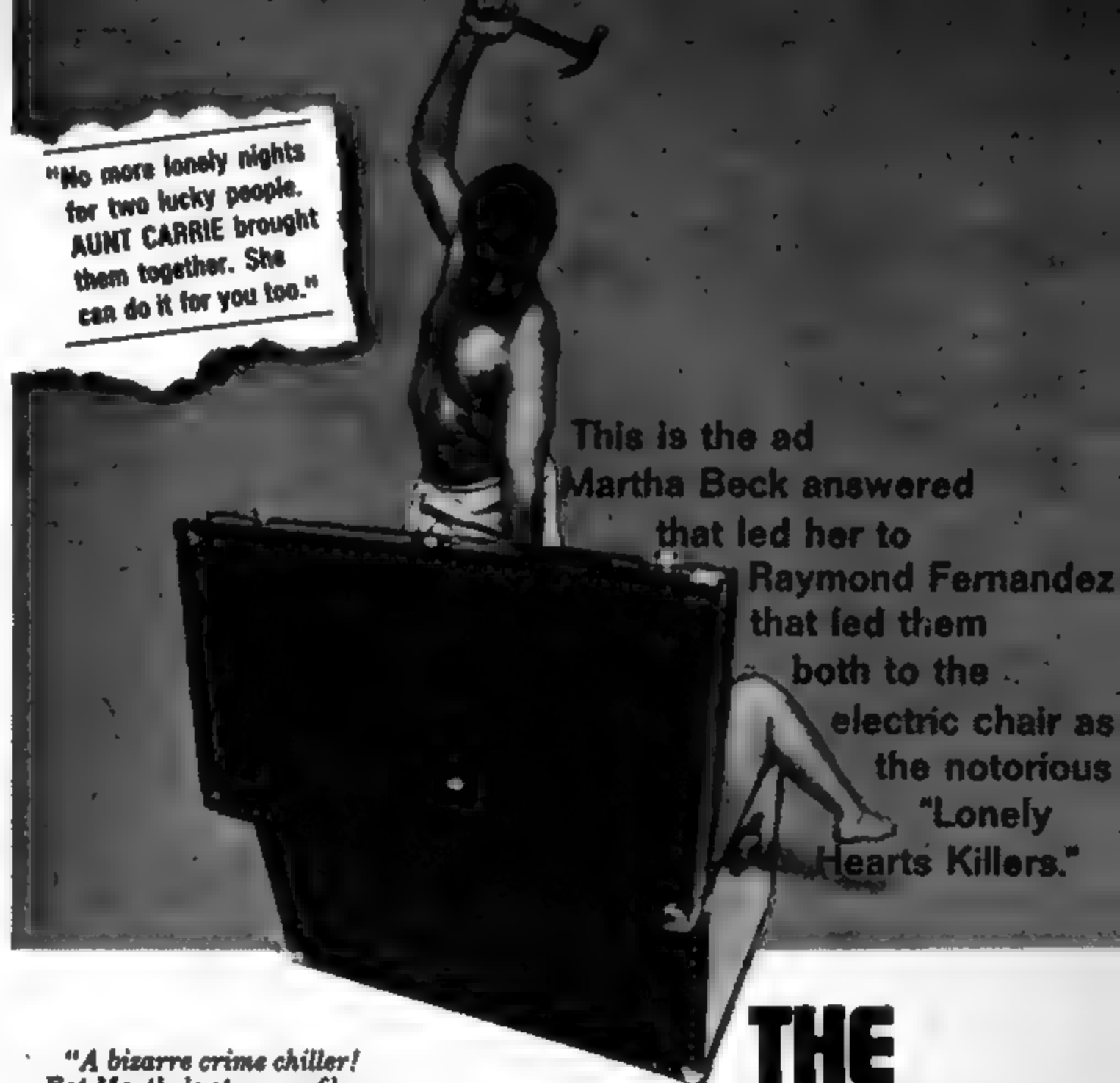
Teeth. Although *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS* is regarded as her first film, Stoler did have a bit part in Michael Cacoyannis' *THE DAY THE FISH CAME OUT* (1967), and appeared in an experimental short made in France, the title of which loosely translates to "The Shipwreck of Mr. Faucet."

"As a result of *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS*, I received a call to meet Alan J. Pakula, and ended up doing a five-minute scene in *KLUTE*, playing one of the madams. I was receiving many, many scripts for films about the Fat Girl & the Faggot patterned after *HONEYMOON KILLERS*. I even got a script from Cass Elliot from a story by a friend of hers about the Mamas and the Papas. Cass wanted me to play her part, and she wanted to direct. I refused the role."

After appearing in a film based on Rosalyn Drexler's autobiography about female wrestling, *BELOW THE BELT*, Stoler got her widest exposure as the Nazi commandant in Lina Wertmüller's *SEVEN BEAUTIES*. Since then she has appeared briefly in *DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN* (as a prison guard) and has been a regular on television's *One Life to Live* and *Pee Wee's Playhouse* (as the nosey neighbor Mrs. Steve).

The real life Shirley Stoler is a polar-opposite of her Martha Beck. It's interesting to imagine her bringing Beck to the surface. "I was glad to interject even the slightest bit of humor into some scenes, as there was so little in the film. The cafeteria scene was a chance for that, and it worked rather well."

As Fernandez, Tony LoBianco, also unknown at the time, was cast. Roger Greenspun noted that the actor, "With slightly too much profile and a characterization that suggests an immensely humanized early Bela Lugosi, is brilliant." Stoler recalls LoBianco "was especially good. I would say that the filmmakers used Tony's ego, although he didn't know it, to arrive at the character. You can tell just by the way he walks through scenes." After this, LoBianco worked his way to becoming a major character actor in film and television. One of his best performances was as the confused detective in Larry Cohen's *GOD TOLD ME TO*.



"A bizarre crime chiller! Fat Martha's story on film combines the mood of 'IN COLD BLOOD' with a 'BONNIE AND CLYDE' theme."
N.Y. Daily News

THE HONEYMOON KILLERS

DEAR MARTHA

Since *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS* opens and closes with letters written to Beck by Fernandez, "Dear Martha" was its working title. This is an example of the personal approach taken, peppered with voyeurism, attributed to Leonard Kastle. "The real star of the movie," wrote Roger Greenspun, "is its writer-director. Direction, the sum of those decisions that the filmmaker must feel as moral imperatives and that constitute the authorship of a movie, places Kastle among the important deliberate artists of his medium." In *Cult Movies* (Delacorte, 1981), Danny Peary notes Kastle's "handling of actors is truly outstanding . . . his use of excerpts from the works of Gustav Mahler, thus accentuating the dramatic tension with music, is much in the manner of Welles, Truffaut, and Chabrol . . . he uses tracking shots and pans to search for his characters like Truffaut."

Work on the sets in New York and Massachusetts was not as harmonious as the critics would have it. Shirley Stoler recalled that "Warren Steibel and Leonard Kastle were very argumentative people. Kastle really wanted to direct it, but didn't have the courage to put himself in that position. Martin Scorsese was the first director on the picture, he was just out of school. He did the first scene where Martha comes in on a nurse and an intern fooling around on a bed, which was shot in a real hospital. Even though Scorsese wasn't really experienced, he had a strong sense of direction. He also shot the scenes of me in the lake. My screams were real in that scene - I was terrified. Eventually, Scorsese was taken out because of a personality clash. Following him was a sort-of ex-editor who was really incompetent."

Fat Martha...
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forget her as
one of...

THE HONEY- MOON KILLERS

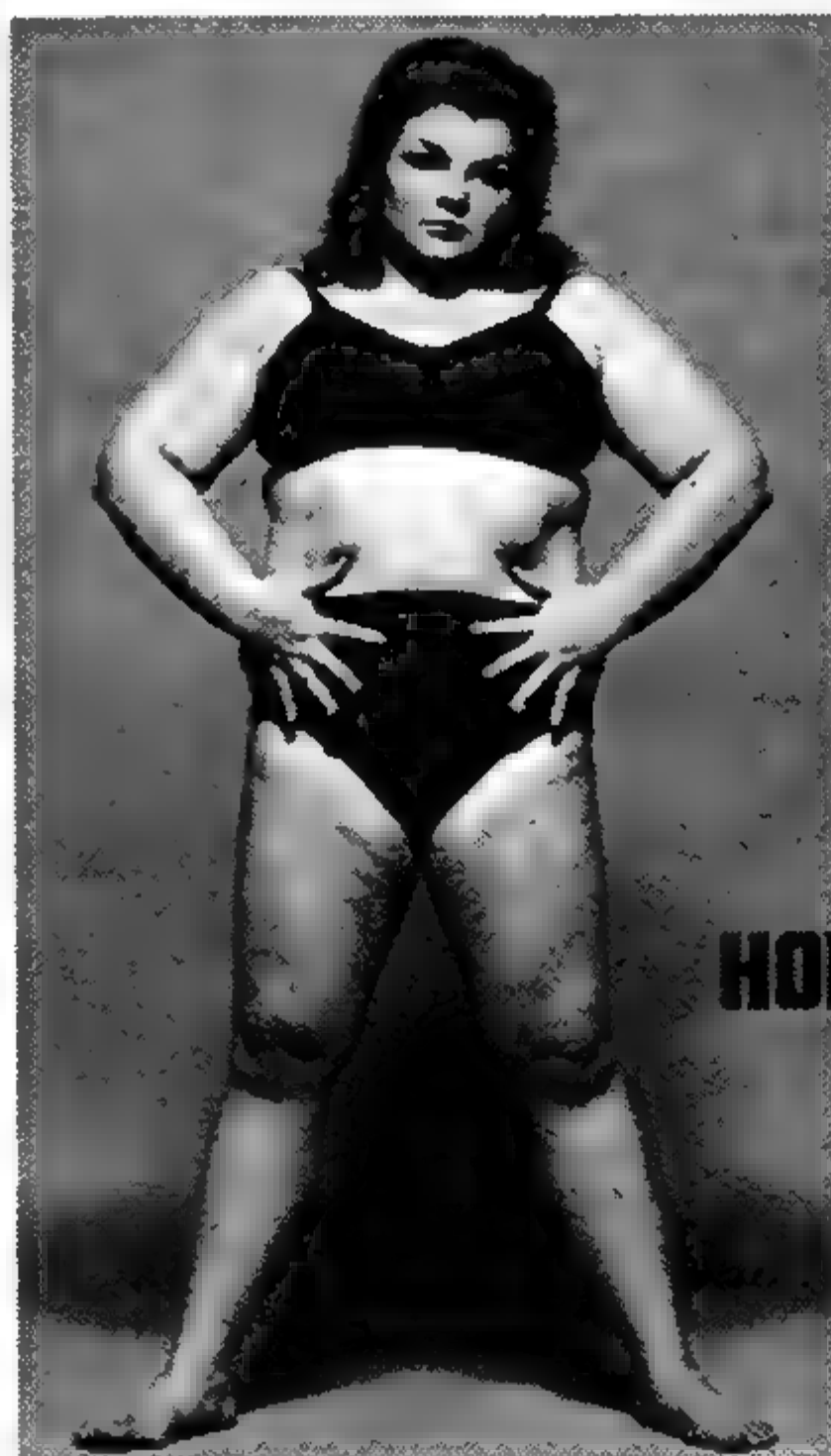


After a couple of weeks, Kastle took over although he really had no knowledge about directing. Somehow the picture managed to direct itself, not really needing a director. Scorsese had a certain amount of creativity, but nobody else did."

Nonetheless, between its deliberate pacing, diffused black-and-white (recalling the early-1960's Ingmar Bergman films *THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY* and *THE SILENCE*), and natural lighting, *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS* works as "a director's film." "If anyone were to take responsibility for its quality, it would be the cinematographer, Oliver Wood," Shirley notes. "He loved very long takes and, with lighting, he liked the diffused look. He didn't do anything to cover the lamps or dim the light, preferring what was naturally there. There's one scene where the two women are in bed, Martha slapping the other and suddenly the screen goes black. Everyone thought the film broke. But then a lamp goes on as Tony LoBianco sits in a dark room. That was just one of Oliver's ideas. I thought Oliver was brilliant - he created the film, especially the look of it which tried for that pulpy, *True Detective* quality."

HONEYMOON HYPE

Rejected by distributors until *Variety* ran a favorable review, the film received critical praise and wide distribution, recouping its \$200,000 budget within a week. Shirley Stoler recalls that "Some people loved it, others were quite hostile. Pauline Kael in *The New Yorker* blasted it for several paragraphs, yet ended her review with 'But you can't altogether dismiss it,' a strange thing to say - like the operation wasn't a success, but the patient is fine."



A WARREN STEIBEL PRODUCTION SHIRLEY STOLER • TONY LO BIANCO • MARY JANE HIGBY • LEONARD KASTLE

T H E A T R E

Cinerama Releasing opened it with campy promotion. Newspapers could choose between an ad of Shirley in bra and panties, or one of Tony raising a hammer to a trunk with an arm sticking out of it. A "Fat Is Sexy" campaign was used by desperate theatre managers, accommodated by Shirley's press-release statement, "I brought to my role my belief that fat women can be sexually fascinating and just as erotic as thin ones." Shirley was also sent on a promotional tour "for two months and 25,000 miles, as far North as Toronto, as far South as Atlanta. We also went to England and France."

Fat Martha...
you'll
never
forget
her as
one of...

THE HONEYMOON KILLERS



Today *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS* holds a unique position as a hybrid of genres, categories and styles. Its critical notice has kept it afloat in theatrical revivals and video rentals for an audience comprised of artists and buffs. Respected cineastes analyze its significance as a breakthrough for politics and aesthetics in the mainstream, while it holds further value for a cult in tune with its B-film sensibility. A "small" picture that latches on to social investigation, it also recalls 1940's film noir. It is many things at once, and succeeds by handling its various ingredients one step at a time. Constant interest has, for almost 18 years, kept *THE HONEYMOON KILLERS* from being a "lost" film.

end

THE HONEYMOON KILLERS: 1971, Cinerama Releasing Corporation release of a Rialto Production. Written and Directed by Leonard Kastle. Produced by Warren Steibel. Cinematography by Oliver Wood. Edited by Stan Wenzel and Richard Brophy. Sound by Paul Kowal. Associate Producer, Paul Amato. Assistant to the Producer, Paul Steiner. Music selected from the works of Charles Martin. Cast: Shirley Stoler, Tony LoBianco, Mary Jane Higby, Lillian Rizzuto, Mimi Michaels, Mary Brown, Elm Ransom, Mary Engel, Guy Sord, Mike Miller, Dana Amato, Col. William Adams. 127 minutes, black & white.

THE BASTARD CHILD SPEAKS OUT

Is it true that American audiences insist that Canadian films lie about their origin? Distributors seem to think so. For instance nine out of every ten slasher flicks are made up here to take advantage of our sagging dollar and with the sole exception of *My Bloody Valentine*, every last one of them has bent over backwards to make the viewer believe that it's set in the States. A shame, really. I think it'd be hysterical if we projected an international image of being the land of homicidal maniacs, slaughtering half our population. Of course junk is junk and who really gives a shit, but now this kind of idiocy is getting out of hand. The only time *The Adventure of Faustus Bidgood* has been seen in your country was by a gang of New York distributors. Their key objection seemed to be this: "But why didn't you set it in New York?"

Such insight. The political undercurrent of this film, blatantly obvious, isn't even Canadian: it is singularly Newfoundlander. Newfoundland wasn't even a part of Canada until World War II when F.D.R. and Churchill, attracted to the (then) strategic position of the Gander Airport, put the pressure on to somehow secure it as part of the Alliance. To this day this former nation, now desperately impoverished because of the international rape of its fishing resources, has been treated like a bastard child by the rest of the country, isolated and neglected except for being the brunt of that dull bigot humor, ethnically interchangeable with the same punchlines worldwide, that typifies its people as stupid. Faustus puts that notion soundly to rest, and the psychological climate that the viewer, even the elsewhere Canadian one, enters is distinctly and disturbingly foreign.

by MICHAEL WILL



It takes place in the provincial capitol of St. John's, a very nineteenth century-looking seaport that's sprawled across barren rocks. Much of the action is centered around the city's one intrusive skyscraper (deco and about ten stories high), the aptly named Confederation Building. It's here that Faustus Bidgood (played by co-director Andy Jones), a timid and soft-spoken ex-mantal patient, toils as a lowly bureaucrat for the Ministry of Education. His fellow employees all either ignore or torment him ("So look who's ten minutes late," one comments as he walks in, "...and at the expense of the taxpayers. I'd call that treason. Didn't they used to hang people for treason?") and he retaliates in his mind by butchering them in various gory ways. All except for the vivacious Heady (Mary Walsh), whom he adores from afar and tries to seduce, also in his imagination, but always ends up blowing it in a humiliating manner (in one dream he can't resist the urge to grab her finger and shove it in his itching nostril). His boss, Education Minister Fred Boria-Coombs (Brian Downey) is a raving lunatic who's blackmailing Faustus into helping him impose "Total Education" on the Newfoundland school system. This is a religion that Boria-Coombs has invented, based on a series of cosmic grid lines that only he can see, which stretch across the heavens and mathematically determine all matters of life and death. Part of Faustus' job is to get the goods on Biddle the Transport Minister (Robert Joy, who's unfortunately since gone Hollywood). Boria-Coombs, who despises him, knows that Biddle, who rose to political prominence by being a popular joke teller, was once a flamenco dancer in Toronto and that he secretly thinks that Newfoundlanders are a bunch of hypocritical bastards. Boria-Coombs intends to use this information to gain his theory political momentum and/or expose Biddle as a traitor.

Meanwhile, in the Confederation Building's T.V. station, two programs are in production. One is "Find the Poet Premier". Once a year the provincial leader (Nelson Porter)

vanishes and hides out somewhere on the island, leaving bad poetry clues as to his whereabouts, and people are invited to call in and guess his whereabouts with hopes of winning such fabulous prizes as waffle irons. Another studio is videotaping "The Uncle Henry Penny Show", a nightmarish kiddies' program in which a gawky man in a chicken suit (Brian Hennessy) hops about a barnyard set and squawks out an "Instructive" song ("Sometimes kids are just plain silly! Silly Clair didn't brush her hair! Silly Keith didn't brush his teeth Silly Bruce didn't tie his shoes! Silly me didn't take a pee! Silly you didn't take your poo..."?) and has a nervous break-



Faustus as the president.

down on the air, and runs into the streets in his chicken suit to go on a drinking spree. This is due to the fact that there's a mass murderer loose, killing little girls with poisoned bubble gum, and trying to frame Uncle Henry Penny for the crimes.

Those are the main characters of Faustus' "real" life, where he's tailed about by Bogue (Greg Malone), his elf-like imaginary playmate who's trying to keep Faustus from landing back in the Mental, St. John's tastefully named asylum. The rest of the time we're drawn into Faustus' elaborate fantasy world, where he's

the beloved first president of the newly liberated People's Republic of Newfoundland. In this world, filmed in newsreel black & white, he's a respected V.I.P. who sees his life glamorized in a docudrama. The docudrama also tells the story of his illustrious ancestor, Reverend Peebles (also played by Andy Jones) who, demented like everyone else in the film, is given to such pastimes as running through a graveyard on a leash, and imitating a snarling dog to express his sexual depravity.

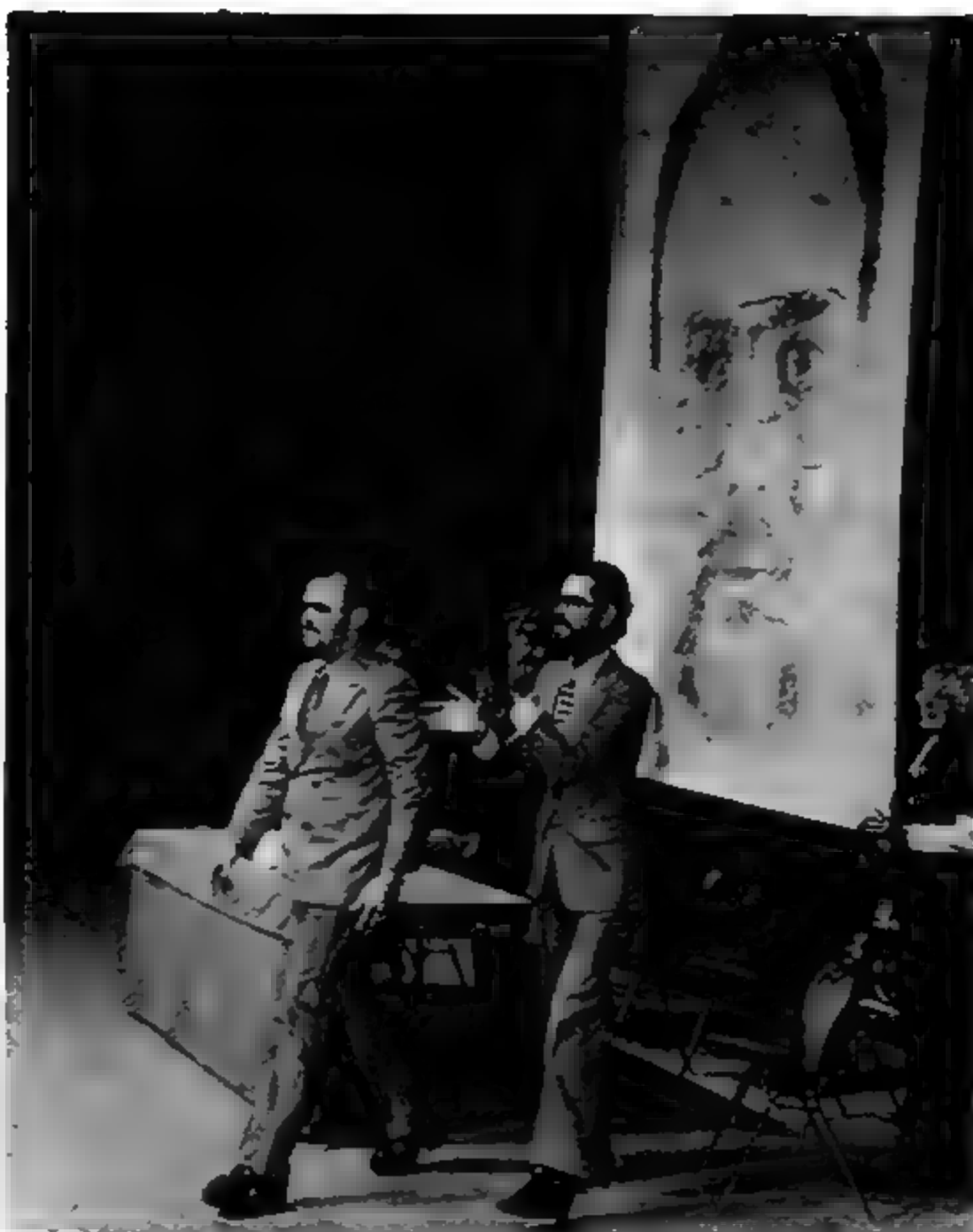
Back and forth we drift between Faustus' fantasy and reality (which in itself is pretty schizophrenic, with the aforementioned alter-ego and trips into his disturbed childhood, as well as a visit from the ghost of Faustus' mother who takes advantage of her time on earth by gobbling down an ice cream cone) and the two worlds come to simultaneous climaxes. In the real one, Faustus rushes onstage during the government workers' Benefit for Crippled Children (a showcase of atrocious regional talent), hoping to become a hero by exposing the child killer (who's just murdered a cute little brownie backstage, for which poor drunken Uncle Henry Penny gets mobbed), but before he can a suspended piano is brought crashing down on top of him. From out of the piano hops the missing poet premier, stealing the limelight that Faustus so desperately craves. At the moment of his spectacular death, he makes one last visit to fantasy land where, coerced into giving up his presidency, he loses glory there as well. At the end, all of the villains, including the child killer, get off scot free, and Faustus, his ambulance blasting off into outer space, floats about in his previous incarnations (Christ, Buddha, etc...) proving to the audience once and for all that he was indeed intended to be the great savior of Newfoundland.

Of course this summary only skims the surface of this densely complex film, which deals with all forms of mental illness with gleeful callousness. It was too much for dreary fraud Jean-Jacques (DIVA) Benieux who, after catching it at the

Toronto fest, actually held a press conference to shriek his moral indignation. Critics generally approved, though, and some, scurrying as usual for safety of labelling, have likened it to a Monty Python scenario directed by Ingmar Bergman. Fuck Monty Python. That's like comparing Brando to fairy irritators like Montgomery Clift and James Dean.

Faustus is the long, gruelling effort of a Newfoundland underground collective called Codco. For the past twenty years they have brought about a theatre renaissance, replacing the stodgy Atlantic traditionalism (which they satirize during the talent show sequence) with a jeering absurdism that more realistically reflects the Maritime psyche, that of the culturally and economically betrayed. A couple of members of the troupe, Tommy Sexton and Greg Malone, have managed to talk the CBC into taping a few episodes of their comedy pilot, *The S & M Comic Strips*, which bonehead program directors have occasionally tossed on as filler, in lieu of a blacked out hockey game or a suddenly cancelled sitcom. Most of the time the two of them are in drag and in one skit called "North-South . . . or Mammy's Revenge," Sexton, dressed as Hattie McDaniel, grabs Malone, who plays a monstrous Miss Scarlet, and bear hugs her until her head exploding and bounces off the ceiling.

From its conception onwards, Faustus was roughly ten years in the making. For directors Michael Jones and his brother Andy, as well as a cast of 900 and the tiny crew, it was an ongoing war for creative independence that alienated financiers, leaving them thousands of dollars in debt with hours of footage from which they sorted out and pieced together a storyline they'd forgotten in the process. The war has continued, as their staunch refusal to allow any outside editing has kept the film out of even the rep house circuit. So far it has only been seen at festivals across Canada and Europe. Here in Montreal it had a week long run at one of our reps and since then only at Main Film, our local co-op.



Faustus takes the stage to expose the child-killer.

I spent a drunken weekend with Andy (my first accesible idol - with Morrissey and Burroughs I couldn't get past the sycophants) and he cued me in on Faustus' present status: possible connection with a Dutch guy who can send it around Europe, but not a breath of interest, nor the faintest idea of how to distribute it anywhere in the states. For the time being *The Adventure of Faustus Bidgood* has been consigned to the underground. Believe me, this film must not be left to rot away. The Canadian jokes, its zero budget uniqueness (these guys make John Waters look like Steven Spielberg) is a total inspiration. It's the most radical piece of cinema this wall-flower country has ever produced.

Faustus' creator can be reached at:
Michael Jones
Box 2111
St. John's, Newfoundland,
CANADA A1C 5R6



*Uncle Henny
Penny Resigns*

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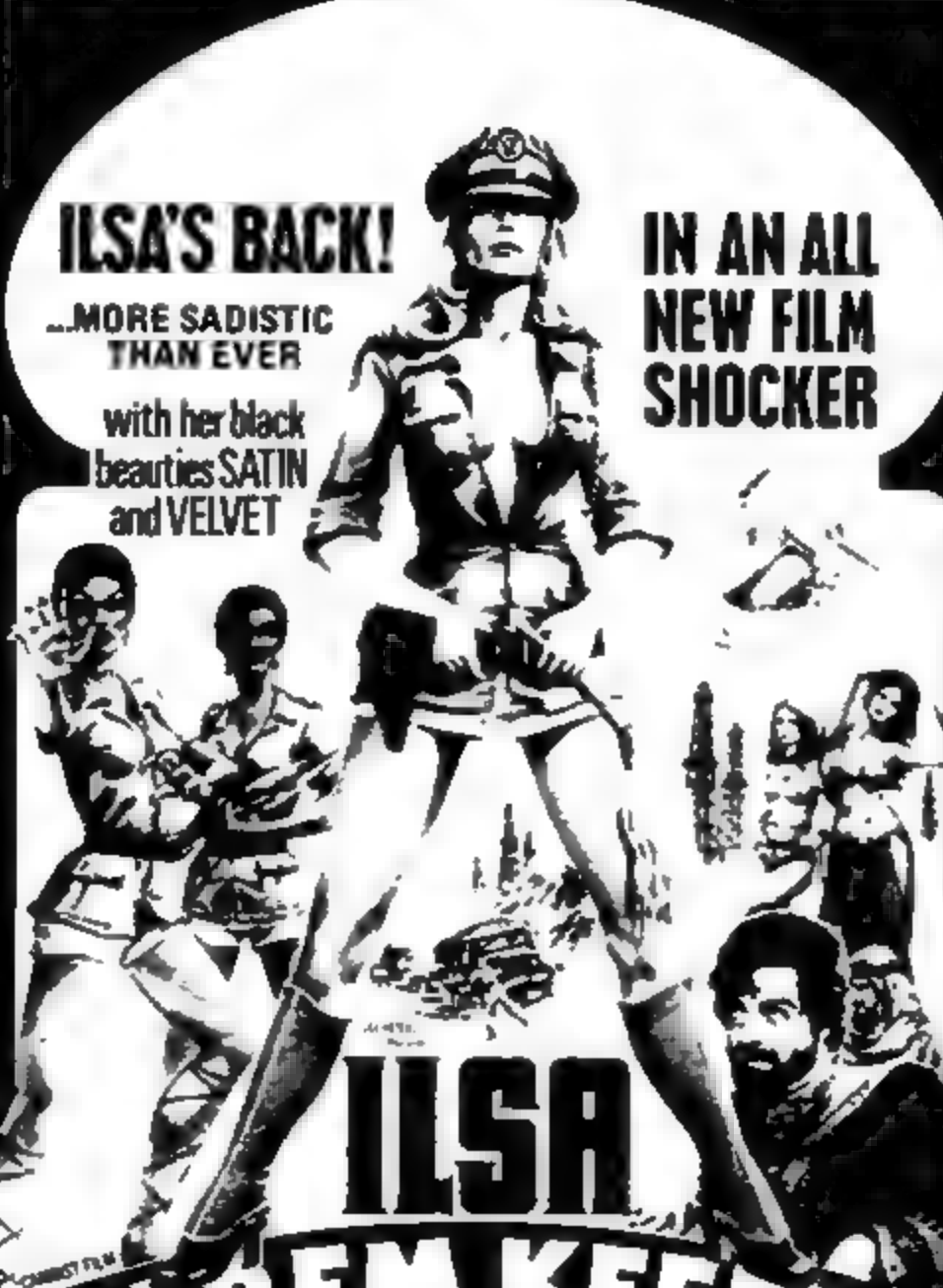
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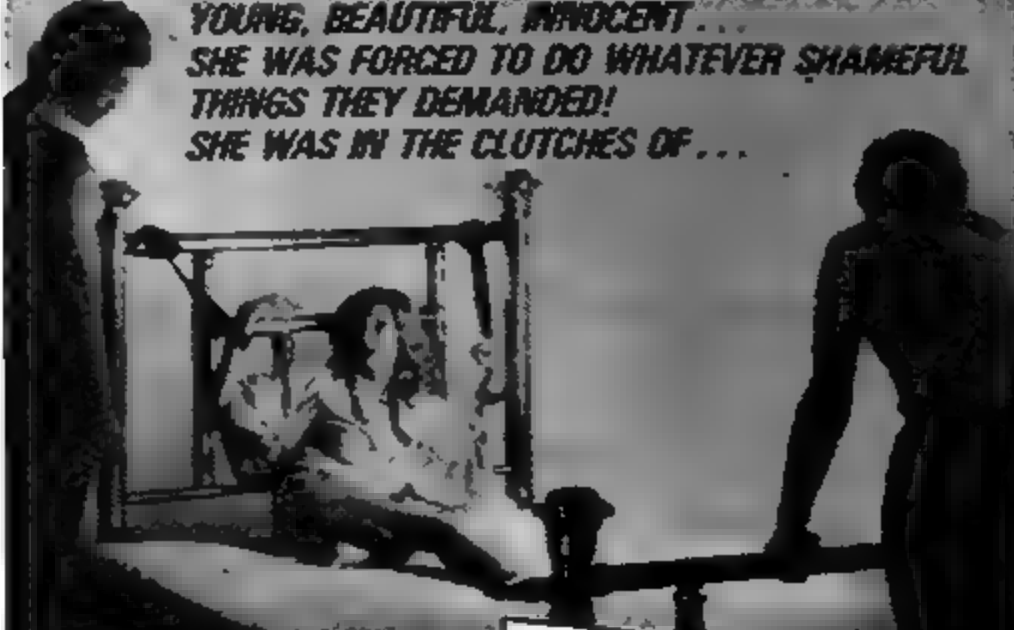
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